Sandwell
CHRONICLE

Thursday, August 23, 2018 | Read by more than 46,000 people | Price when sold 70p

Campaign gains momentum to tackle yobs and bikes

BACKING OVER CCTV PETITION

Report by Megan Archer

HUNDREDS of worried residents have backed an online petition in an attempt to finally put a stop to anti-social behaviour and the illegal use of motorcycles at a popular park.

An online campaign to lobby Sandwell Council into installing CCTV at Britannia Park in Rowley Regis has nearly met its 500-signature target in less than one week since being launched.

Rowley and Blackheath residents rallied together to produce nearly 300 signatures during the first two days of the petition being available for people to add their names.

And as of Monday evening, the total of people to have got involved in the campaign was fewer than 20 signatures away from its 500 names target.

Crimes

Started by Scott – who only uses his first name – under the online name of 80twentyUK, the petition reads: "Recently there has been a severe increase in anti-social behaviour and illegal use of motorcycles in Britannia Park.

"In the past the park has not been free from more serious crimes such as serious assaults and sexual assaults.

"I hope to raise enough support for the council to consider installing CCTV in the park as an initiative to increase the safety of families and deter the minority."

If the petition reaches its target of 500 signatures, Scott has said he will be taking it to his local councillor.

Showing her support, local resident Korraine Fenn said: "I'm sick of the youth being abusive and intimidating, the scramblers that have no regard for anyone. I don't even like taking my five-year-old over there or my dogs."

Fellow resident Sabrina Dowling added: "I'm a local resident and worried that our quiet road is being hit by vandalism. I also walk my dog through the park so it would be nice to feel protected."

Visit change.org/p/sandwell-council-install-cctv-in-britannia-park-rowley/c/739880875 to sign the petition.

£20M VALLEY FLOOD DEFENCES TAKING SHAPE

Work on the £20 million flood defence scheme in Sandwell, which will protect 1,400 homes and businesses, is slowly gathering pace

WORK is steadily continuing on a £20 million flood defence scheme in Sandwell. The Environment Agency project aims to reduce the risk of flooding in Sandwell Valley and protect Forge Mill Farm in West Bromwich from damage, protecting more than 1,400 homes and businesses in the process. It had been in the works for more than three years before bosses gave it the go-ahead in 2017.

Work has been ongoing for several months now, with the defences slowly taking shape.

Thousands of visitors each year visit the beauty spot and the farm near the RSPB lake, which neighbours the River Tame. Chiefs have admitted the work will 'have a significant visual impact' on the surrounding area, but said its safety benefits outweigh the aesthetic drawbacks. They plan to expand defences in Sandwell Valley including earth embankments where water can easily run off in the wake of inclement conditions. These areas will be created near the Forge Mill Farm.

Current embankments would be improved and river outlets will be created.

There would also be improved flood wall defences near the farm itself. Workers plan to build a low-level wall through Witton, combined with an increase in storage capacity at the existing Forge Mill flood storage area.

The river rises in Willenhall and Oldbury and runs through Sandwell Valley, passing through Great Barr and Hamstead before going off to Perry Barr. The agency has evaluated that the River Tame has a one per cent or greater chance of flooding each year.

The scheme will be funded by Defra FCRM Grant in Aid, the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Birmingham City Council and contributions from local businesses.

TRIBUTE

Parade and service to honour war hero

A PARADE and service will be held for First World War Victoria Cross recipient Sergeant Harold Colley – 100 years to the day since his heroic sacrifice on the Western Front. The event will be held in Victoria Park, in Smethwick, on Saturday, where a commemorative paving stone will be unveiled in Sergeant Colley's memory.

Harold Colley

Sergeant Colley – who was living in Cheshire Road, Smethwick, when he joined the army in 1914 as a private with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry – was killed defending against a German attack at Martinpuich, in France, on August 25, 1918.

The event – co-ordinated by the Royal British Legion and Sandwell Council – will run between 10am and 11.30am, with the parade in the park starting at 10.30am and a service at 11am. The Smethwick Heritage Centre will also be open where people can find out more about Sergeant Colley.

POLICE

Woman forced into car by group of men

POLICE are investigating an alleged kidnapping after reports a woman was forced into a car by a group of men in Wednesbury. A woman's screams were heard in a car park outside of Aston Court, off Crankhall Lane, after 1am on Sunday. Four men were said to be surrounding the woman, shouting at her before pushing her into a white Ford Fiesta.

Police arrested a man, but he has since been eliminated from the investigation. They said no-one has been reported missing and they have had no more reports of the incident. Pc Indi Basra, of West Midlands Police, said: "We are very concerned for the welfare of this woman and have been carrying out extensive enquiries to try to find out who she is."

Anyone with information is urged to call 101 giving crime reference number 20SW/189197G/18.

INSIDE

Ahoy there! Olivia sets sail for party

PAGE 14

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CONTENTS

RHODES 6
LETTERS 7
AREA FOCUS 14
AT YOUR LEISURE 22
TV 24
PUZZLES 26
SPORT 35-36

CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk
SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk
PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk
ADVERTISING: Nicola Cope
Tel: 01902 319573
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk
PROPERTY: Colin Bailey
Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731
E-mail: colin.bailey@expressandstar.co.uk
MOTORING: Stuart Whitehead
Tel: 01902 319177
E-mail: stuart.whitehead@expressandstar.co.uk
CLASSIFIED:
Tel: 01902 317878
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Listed church to close after 181 years

St Martin and St Paul Church

A GRADE II-listed church in Tipton is set to close in a move which could see the building eventually sold off.

St Martin and St Paul Church was built in 1837.

But under plans by Lichfield Diocese, the congregation would be moved to St Matthews Church, also in Tipton.

If the proposal to close the church is approved, the diocese could then apply to sell the site.

Ward councillor Ian Jones said: "It is a very sad day the church has to close, but unfortunately the number of people using it has been identified as not sufficient. I can understand why they [the church] are rationalising. It is a difficult one when you do not have the people or money to continue to look after such a building. I hope that St Matthews can accommodate the numbers which move across."

He added: "If it is then sold off, I hope the building has a use which is sympathetic to its current state.

"Given the footfall I'm not sure how it could be used next, maybe a community group could take it on."

The closure was first mooted in 2015 following the retirement of the incumbent.

Fears were then raised that the parish did not have the resources for necessary repairs of the red-brick building. A public meeting was held in April of the same year on the proposal to close the church which is an example of an early Gothic Revival style.

Then, a month later the idea was proposed to combined the parishes of St Martin and St Paul with St Matthews. Last year, an interim minister was appointed to assist St Martin and St Paul through its potential closure. The church, however, provided the base for the Tipton Christmas Tree Light Switch On event last year.

A consultation on the closure ends on September 24. People can comment on the proposal by visiting www.ccpastoral.org

Now Boiler Man gets his own merchandise!

WEST Brom's new superstar, Boiler Man, has stamped his mark in the world of football mascots by launching his very own line of merchandise.

Still on a high from their 7-1 thrashing of Queens Park Rangers at the Hawthorns on Saturday, Baggies fans can now celebrate by snapping up a Boiler Man T-shirt, mug or even a car air freshener perhaps?

The sponsorship mascot, a combi-boiler, has branched out from other house-bound boilers and is now be offering a range of shirts, along with a £4.50 badge, an £8 mug and a £1.50 air freshener.

Boiler Man tweeted: "The moment you've all been waiting for... Boiler Man merch is now online, visit boilermanshop.co.uk to pre-order the hottest merch on the market".

Envy

The all-white appliance posted a picture of himself pointing at one of the new £15 T-shirts, which read "I am Boiler Man".

One fan tweeted: "One week out of the office and I miss this?

"Make sure you save me one before they sell out!"

Another tweeted: "We are the envy of the entire footballing world!!"

Another said: "Not Boiler Man Figure yet?"

Boiler Man, who is the brainchild of sponsors Ideal Boilers, which is based in Hull, and which has a partnership with the club, has been an instant hit among fans and pundits.

At the start of the season one person tweeted: "OMG!!! When your mascot is a boiler! Good one West Brom." BT Sports Presenter Jules Breach tweeted: "Meet West Brom's new mascot... yes, it's a boiler with legs, wearing a cap.

"I kid you not. I love this season already."

Ideal Boilers originally named the mascot "Vinny the Vogue" after its range of boilers, but this was soon dropped in favour of the Boiler Man moniker.

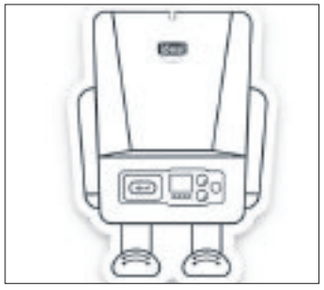
The Twitter account, @IdealBoilerMan, has attracted more than 3,000 followers since Boiler Man's debut on August 4.

In one of his latest tweets, the Baggies' mascot told followers it was "leaking goals at The Hawthorns today", as his side completed a 7-1 victory over Queens Park Rangers Football Club on Saturday.

It is not yet known what will be done with the proceeds of the merchandise.

Hot under the collar, well, nearly, with this Boiler Man T-shirt

The mug with its simple message


An air freshener, but does it smell of boiler?

New homes plan backed despite fears of residents

DOZENS of new homes will be built in Tipton despite concerns from campaigners about the building project and more traffic. Sandwell councillors have formally approved the plans for 61 houses to be constructed on parcels of land in Princes End.

People living in the area objected to saying they believe the development will impact on their quality of life. But the plans were moved without further public discussion when it came before the full council last month.

Members of Sandwell Council's planning committee had already backed the scheme earlier in the year. In total, 63 new homes will be built on council-owned sites bordered by Strathmore Road, Kingsbury Road, Sandgate Road, Ridgeway Road and Henn Street.

Ron Roberts, whose mother lives nearby, helped organise a minibus taking a group of residents to attend the fully council meeting on July 17.

"There will be disruption. There will be traffic coming up and down these roads. It is mainly older people living around there," said the 50-year-old who lives off Arthur Road, in Tipton.

The homes are part of the council's aim to create hundreds of new homes in the borough over the next three years.Council cabinet member, Councillor Paul Moore, said: "We are proud of our plans to build more than 600 new council houses across Sandwell by

Pub to be named after Bill Archer

A WEDNESBURY pub is set to be renamed the William Archer after the former mayor and long-serving councillor.

Amber Taverns have recently taken over the George Inn, in Upper High Street, and appealed on Facebook for a new name for the venue.

Residents voted in favour of naming it after Mr Wednesbury, Bill Archer – who passed away in June aged 91. Mr Archer served as a Tory councillor for 36 years and was Sandwell mayor between 2005 and 2006. He retired in 2010 aged 83.

His daughter, Councillor Elaine Costigan, said the family were overwhelmed and felt emotional by the gesture – as her sister Linda, who died 17 years ago, had also worked at the pub.

She said: "We are so overwhelmed about it – I have been asked to open it official in October. The company manager called me and he was blown with the comments and couldn't quite believe it.

"My dad was such a lovely family man, but also loved by the residents. It is so special for our family, we are all quite emotional about it – plus my sister who passed away aged 51, worked in there so it's even more special."It is great for our superb town Wednesbury – the place that dad loved."

Warehouse scheme will create 10 new jobs

THE modernisation of a West Bromwich food and drink warehouse will create 10 new jobs.

Hyperama, a Nottingham-headquartered cash and carry wholesaler and food distributor, has secured a £15 million finance package from HSBC to refurbish the Richmond Street warehouse, increase its importing capabilities and support its growth ambitions.

It will use part of the HSBC finance package to modernise the site, which will help to improve efficiency and the overall shopping experience for customers.

The business will also use a £2.5 million combined trade and overdraft line to increase imports from the Far East, together with an increase in other working capital lines to support its expansion.

Marcus Singh, managing director of Hyperama, said: "We're delighted to receive financial support from HSBC UK. Our customers demand an ever-increasing range of food and drink products from overseas and the funding package puts us in a great position to meet this demand.

"It will also allow us to tap into new trade markets"

Hyperama partnered with HSBC for the bank's expertise in global markets and its innovative funding solutions, which are critical for the business as it embarks on an ambitious expansion plan.

Walsall lock flight targeted by yobs

VANDALS have damaged the lock flight at a Black Country canal.

One of the balance beams was damaged along with the brickwork which caused flooding at Walsall Canal.

The incident happened overnight on between Thursday night and Friday morning last week.

Operations team leader Lee Bates tweeted: "Mindless vandals targeted Walsall lock flight last night causing flooding, damage to brickwork, washed out the towpath and damage to one of the balance beams."

Building set to go

A FORMER resource centre is to be knocked down.

The bulldozers will move in on the old Church Vale Resource Centre on Lowry Road, Smethwick, after an application to demolish it was accepted by planners in Sandwell.

Documents submitted with the plans said the centre was 'void and surplus to requirements' and had attracted antisocial behaviour.

Caps tribute to honour Baggies legends

Billy Bassett, Albion's founding father

WEST Bromwich Albion have honoured the man considered to be the club's founding father alongside 1968 FA Cup final hero Graham Lovett.

Family members of Lovett, a much-loved figure who also carved out a second career at the Express & Star, were pitchside at The Hawthorns on Saturday to receive a specially-crafted club cap.

They were joined by the families of Billy Bassett and Joe Wilson, who both played in the Baggies' first-ever league game back in 1888. All three men are regarded as legends having each left a significant mark on Albion's history.

The families of Wilson and Bassett, often considered to be the club's founding father, got in touch with the Baggies after reading about the caps project, which will see every player to have made a first-team appearance receive a cap, numbered according to when they made their debut.

The presentation was due to be made by Ally Robertson. Lovett's cap is number 462. Bassett gets the number 1 cap.

FA Cup hero – the late Graham Lovett

Pressure grows on G4S as city jail taken over

UNDER-FIRE security firm G4S faced a battle, this week, to hang on to its other prisons – amid the crisis engulfing Winson Green jail.

The Birmingham prison was taken into government control after a damning inspection.

Now, MP Emma Reynolds is questioning whether HMP Oakwood, near Wolverhampton, which houses more than 2,000 inmates, should also be taken back by the Ministry of Justice.

G4S was stripped of control of Winson Green, now known as HMP Birmingham, following rising violence and widespread drug abuse.

An unannounced inspection found prisoners openly dealing and smoking drugs; staff asleep on duty; widespread bullying; filthy conditions.

Prisons minister Rory Stewart said 'drastic action' was needed to rescue HMP Birmingham following the extreme step of taking it off G4S.

John Spellar, MP for Warley, said: "I had this raised with me by constituents who have been in the prison and I raised this with the prison inspectorate after constituents informed me of the very serious situation there.

"It is absolutely the right decision. What I find extraordinary is them giving it back to G4S in six months' time. Clearly there has been a serious failure in senior management."

Asked on whether G4S should be allowed to continue running its prisons, Mr Spellar said: "First things first, we want to see them get Winson Green sorted out. That is the most important thing as it is a big prison right in the middle of the conurbation, clearly something has gone drastically wrong, Then we will look at the further implications."

The Ministry of Justice said there were no immediate plans to review other privately-run jails. Ministers acted amid a growing crisis at Winson Green, which was described by Chief Inspector of Prisons Peter Clarke as the 'worst prison he had ever been to'. There were 1,147 assaults, including fights, at the jail in 2017, more than any other prison in England and Wales that year, while there was also a large-scale riot involving 600 inmates the previous year.

Derelict factory goes up in smoke

The huge blaze at its height, which saw dozens of firefighters called out to the derelict factory

MORE than 60 firefighters tackled a huge factory fire in a derelict building in central Birmingham.

The abandoned two-storey building became engulfed in flames at around 5pm on Sunday evening and emergency services were called to the scene to tackle the raging blaze on Priory Road.

Homeowners living nearby were advised to keep windows and doors closed and police cordoned off Priory Road and Aston Hall Road overnight and into Monday morning.

A spokesperson for West Midlands Fire Service said: "The fire involved a two storey derelict factory and we had 12 fire engines at the scene. Due to the severity of the fire we had to section off parts of the building to tackle them individually. It's too early to say on the cause of the fire, however once demolition personnel have finished their demolition of the site, further inspections and investigations will take place."

Two crews stayed at the scene overnight to secure the area.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Spellar hits out at waits on claims

BLACK Country MP John Spellar has called on the Home Secretary to 'get a grip' amid reports some people have been left waiting more than 20 years for decisions on their asylum claims.

The Labour MP for Warley said the Home Office was 'in meltdown' after a national newspaper lifted the lid on several cases of applicants' long waits.

He called on Home Secretary, and Bromsgrove MP, Sajid Javid to do more, posting on Twitter: "Over 20 years for an asylum decision, half cases outside time limits as described as 'not straightforward', Home Office in meltdown, when is 'Action Man' Javid going to get a grip?"

Off-roaders' ban at beauty spots

PLANS to ban nuisance offroad vehicles from a beauty spot in Sedgley have been signed off by council bosses.

Motor vehicles, motorbikes and quad bikes will now be banned from 11 beauty spots across the Dudley borough after councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, signed off a public spaces protection order.

Restricted areas include Milking Bank in Sedgley, Fens Pool Nature Reserve, Mullet Park, Barrow Hill Nature Reserve, Russells Hall and Pensnett Technology College.

Indecent images officer is bailed

A POLICE inspector who admitted making or distributing more than 300 indecent images of children, including a film of a six-year-old boy, has been granted bail 24 hours after being remanded in custody.

Lee Bartram, aged 44, from Bustleholme Lane, West Bromwich, pleaded guilty to five counts of making indecent images of a child and two counts of distributing such material when he appeared at Walsall Magistrates' Court on Thursday.

He was granted bail after a court was told prosecutors had wrongly claimed he had filmed a teenager sunbathing while on police bail.

Roadworks warning for gas firm project

MOTORISTS are being warned to face delays with the closure of a Tipton road. A24-hour road closure is be in place in Locarno Road while Cadent Gas Ltd carry out work.

The road is expected to reopen by August 31, before 24-hour temporary traffic lights are installed in the road from September 3, until September 20.

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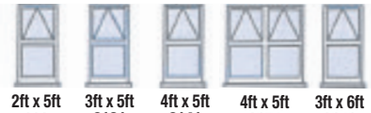

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COUNTY NEWS

Shop a Chop Shop campaign launched

POLICE have launched a Shop a Chop Shop campaign following concerns around car key burglaries and car-jackings in the West Midlands.

It comes as vehicle crime has increased over the last two years driven by the demand for parts to repair write-offs, sold as repairable by the insurance industry.

Around five times more vehicles, mainly luxury models are sold at auction as fixable write-offs rather than vehicles to be scrapped for spare parts. It's suspected this is inspiring criminal gangs to steal cars to order for spares. The vehicles are broken down at 'chop shops'.

Fall in identity fraud numbers

IDENTITY fraud has fallen for the first time since 2014 but remains high with more personal information available online, according to a report.

Fraud prevention body Cifas recorded a five per cent drop in identity fraud in the first half of this year compared to the same time last year, falling from 89,199 to 84,463.

There was a 12pc cent fall in the volume of bank accounts being targeted and a 34pc drop in attempts to obtain mobile phone contracts.

But there was a 12pc rise in fraudsters after plastic card accounts, while identity fraud against online retail accounts was up 24pc.

BBC won't appeal the Sir Cliff case

THE BBC has said appealing after losing the High Court case brought by Sir Cliff Richard over its coverage of a police raid on his home 'would inevitably mean an expensive legal cul de sac and one that would simply prolong Sir Cliff's distress'.

It said: "Instead the BBC is writing to ask the Government to consider a review of the law in this important area to protect the right to properly and fairly report criminal investigations, and name the person."

TUC hits out over rail fare increases

THE Trades Union Congress has hit out at rail fare increases and called again for services to return to public ownership.

TUC analysis found that some annual season tickets will go up by up to £163 a year in the latest round of increases.

General Secretary Frances O'Grady said: "This is an insult to hard-pressed commuters."

Maria backs apprenticeships path

Maria Collins and Charles Bamford of IMI Precision Engineering

AN award-winning female apprentice has urged young people to consider the vocational learning route after receiving their exam results.

Maria Collins, who works at the Fradley site of Birmingham-based IMI Precision Engineering, believes apprenticeships offer school or college leavers a fantastic way to accelerate their careers and earn while they are learning towards a possible degree.

The 21-year-old trainee engineer, from Burntwood, is confident this path should no longer be seen as 'the last resort' and points to recent figures from her Ofsted 'Outstanding' training provider In-Comm Training that it could represent a £100,000 opportunity, which equates to the combined amount an apprentice earns in wages and the debt they avoid on university tuition fees. She has just completed a three-year apprenticeship in mechanical engineering and is now setting her sights on securing a degree while developing her practical skills at the world leader in fluid power and motion controls.

"I saw a lot of my older friends get their degrees and then struggle to find jobs so I thought I'd take a look at doing something vocational that would have a position at the end of it," explained Maria, who was named as the 'Outstanding Learner of the Year' at the In-Comm Training Awards in June. It has been a great decision. The experience has been fantastic. I've learned a lot about the basics in engineering, such as milling and turning, and then gradually developed more advanced skills in circuit design and 3D CAD design.

"This was done part-time, with the rest of my week spent working at my employer, getting to know staff and understanding how I could apply these new skills to my own role."

Nerves turn to delight on A-level results day

THE moment of truth came and went for thousands of nervous youngsters across the Black Country and Staffordshire as they opened their A-level results.

Many schools and colleges saw their pass rates rise and happy teenagers were all smiles as they secured places at university. One head teacher at Dudley's Ellowes Hall Sports College was delighted.

Report by Heather Large

Star pupil Olivia Saunders, from Lower Gornal, marked herself as the first pupil to ever achieve two A* grades.

Olivia, aged 18, said: "It feels amazing. I'll be starting in October at the University of Birmingham to study history. After that I'd like to stay on to get my teaching degree."

Charlotte Collins helped continue the college's success streak after achieving an A* in English literature, an A in sociology and a C in psychology. The 18-year-old had to learn to walk again after a battle with scoliosis whilst undergoing her GCSEs – but was determined it wouldn't stop her.

Head Alan Jasper, said he was 'over the moon' with the results, with almost 50 per cent of entries at A2 or equivalent awarded grades A* or A.

Meanwhile, almost half of all students at St Edmund's Catholic Academy in Wolverhampton achieved at least one A* or A grade.

Kyra Martin-Chambers, from Wolverhampton, had battled with sickle-cell anaemia. The 18-year-old even had to do coursework from New Cross Hospital whilst undergoing treatment. But now, thanks to achieving a distinction* in law, merit in health and social care and a D in sociology, the teenager will now be studying adult nursing at Coventry University. She said: "I'm just overjoyed because it has been really hard over the last two years."

More students achieved top grades at St Thomas More Catholic School with the numbers gaining A* to A rising from 9.3 per cent to 16 per cent and the number of students gaining A* to B increasing from 25 to 34 per cent.

There were celebrations at Aldridge School too, where Alesha Peace is off to Oxford University to read classics after achieving an A* in classics and English literature.

Joseph Leckie Academy's Sixth Form was celebrating a 100 per cent pass rate in 21 subjects with successes in both vocational as well as A Level courses.

At Cheslyn Hay Sport and Community High School Sixth Form 99 per cent of students achieved A* to E grades. The number of students achieving the highest qualifications rose again with 36 per cent achieving A*-B.

Success at the double for twins

Sisters Lauren and Charlotte Smith outside the entrance at Q3 Academy in Great Barr

THEY'RE not just twins, they're best friends – and now sisters Lauren and Charlotte Smith are set to continue their adventures together at university.

The siblings left Great Barr's Q3 Academy with beaming smiles and in high spirits after discovering they both secured a place at the University of Exeter.

Family and friends came together for a shindig at the weekend before the pair leave home for higher education on their 19th birthdays.

Charlotte said: "I'm a little nervous but excited. It's definitely been time-consuming but I feel it was all worth it in the end." Lauren managed to scoop three A grades in history, maths and religious education, while Charlotte was awarded two A grades and a B in chemistry, history and maths.

The 18-year-old students said they were happy they secured a place at their first choice of university and will now continue studying side by side.

Lauren said: "We're the best of friends. It's been really good studying together. A lot of people don't have anyone to revise with, but we had each other."

College is celebrating a record in pass rates

STAR performers at Sandwell College were last week celebrating yet another outstanding set of A Level results with their students.

Youngsters at Central Sixth campus once more achieved an impressive 99 per cent pass rate overall, with a 100 per cent pass rate in a record 19 subjects.

Tamara Herrington got A*AA in geography, biology and politics. She is now going to the University of Durham to study politics.

Katy Forrester got A*AA in English language and literature, drama and theatre, and sociology.

She is on her way to Lancaster University to study theatre and English literature.

Kaven Judge is now set to start his higher apprenticeship with KPMG after accomplishing a hat-trick of As in accounting, business and economics. Kaven will be earning a salary and supported to achieve his accounting and finance degree and professional accountancy qualification by the world-leading professional services firm.

Sameer Qadeer also gained triple A grades in biology, chemistry and maths, and David Nemec gained an A,B, and an A. Sameer will be reading medicine at Birmingham University, while David will be studying for his degree in biomedical science at University College London.

Director of Central Sixth and Assistant Principal, Dr Matt Lamb, said: "Due to the recent reforms A Levels are now more challenging than ever before, and so it is a tribute to staff and students to have received these excellent results."

Wide choice in uni places via clearing

YOUNGSTERS who are still seeking university places are likely to face a wealth of choice as institutions scramble to attract good candidates on to their degree courses.

University leaders suggested that there could be more people who are using clearing this year to apply to university for the first time.

A snapshot survey suggested that, even before results were released, more than 26,000 courses were available in clearing for students in England only.

For those looking for degree places through clearing this summer, there are suggestions that they are likely to find it is a buyers' market.

Nine in 10 UK institutions have at least one course listed in clearing, the survey found.

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MMR alert in wake of measles outbreak

HEALTH bosses at Sandwell council are urging young adults to check whether they have had their MMR vaccine following a recent outbreak of measles across the country.

They have drawn up a targeted marketing campaign in the wake of an outbreak which has included cases in the West Midlands. Young adults may have missed their vaccine due to a controversy that occurred 20 years ago surrounding the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, which falsely linked the jab to autism and resulted in a significant drop in its uptake.

Ansaf Azhar, interim Director of Public Health, said: "Measles can be a very serious illness and lead to severe complications, especially in people who are particularly vulnerable or have other health conditions."

Public health chief, Councillor Elaine Costigan, said: "It is important that people remain aware of the risk of measles, especially when travelling to places where there has been an outbreak.

"The misery caused by measles is entirely preventable. If children and young adults have missed these vaccinations in the past, it's important to take up the vaccine now from GP.

Measles is an incredibly infectious disease that is why people are being asked not to go to their GP or A&E department if they suspect they or their child may have measles. Instead people should call their GP or NHS111 for advice.

Brum in top 10 for cities to visit

NEW research has revealed that Birmingham is among the top 10 best cities to visit this summer.

Payday loan company Wonga has put together the Summer Friendly City Index for the UK that has ranked cities against the number of free activities they offer, such as landmarks, museums and parks. This number was then compared to the city's population to create a top 10 with Birmingham coming in ninth place.

The city's large population of 992,000 people brought it further down the list with it offering six landmarks, eight museums and three parks.

York came out on top with London surprisingly finishing in tenth place.

James McMaster, Head of Marketing in the UK at Wonga, said: "Our research shows that it makes sense to stay in the UK for a short break rather than jetting off. We've also created easy-to-use downloadable city guides to show what's on offer for a UK city trip on a budget."

Works to council house almost complete

Sandwell Council House in Smethwick

ITS been two years in the making and seen more than £1 million pumped into it but works at a Black Country council house have now neared completion.

Historic building restoration firm Stone Edge has been on the site of Smethwick Council House since September 2016. And now the team look to be wrapping things up at the site – with plans to conclude all the works on September 27.

The Grade-II listed building looks to be restored to its former glory from the front, with scaffolding having been stripped away during work which finished last week.

Now the restored and repaired terracotta facade, windows and crest above the main entrance can been seen clearly once more.

The process has seen multiple jobs carried out on the site in High Street, Smethwick, including a restoration of the buildings clock tower where its original colours were reapplied.

Sandwell Council's strategic lead for strategic access and land, Lee Constable, said that the council's attention would now turn to the inside of the listed building. Mr Constable said: "We have now addressed all of the issues. In the process we have actually repaired the roof covering as well as the clock tower.

"These things take time, they are not straight forward.

"Now we can turn our focus to the inside and there is a commitment now to look at the building internally."

Council leader Councillor Steve Eling said the authority had a 'responsibility' to maintain buildings which are viewed as important by people in the borough.

Hospital completion bill soars by another £300m

THE Government is to spend more than £300 million of taxpayers' money to finish work on the stalled Midland Metropolitan Hospital at Smethwick, with work getting under way this autumn.

It will take the final bill for the hospital to more than £500 million when it opens in 2022 – four years later than originally planned.

In the meantime urgent repairs and weather proofing work is needed at the site, which has stood idle since building company Carillion collapsed in January. Up to £20 million will be spent over the coming months to secure the site from further weather damage before the winter, so construction work by a new contractor can start next spring.

Despite the best efforts of maintenance staff to protect the vast site from the worst of the wind and rain over the last seven months, some areas inside are suffering from mould where water has seeped in. A handful of former Carillion workers have been kept at the site by the Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust.

Adhesives

Rob Maiden, the former safety manager on the construction site, said all plasterboarding in the building would need to be checked for damp to ensure there was no further risk of mould.

"Some of it will have to be replaced, along with some of the building materials that have run out of date, like the adhesives, and some of the metalwork that won't be able to be salvaged," he said.

A 29-year Carillion veteran and a member of the core team at the Midland Met site since before construction started three years ago, he admitted it had been "sad and really frustrating" to see work on the project stalled for so many months.

But there was an enthusiastic reception for the Government's decision to directly pay for work to complete the two-thirds built hospital.

The idea of a second private finance deal, similar to the one with Carillion, has been dropped and instead the money will come from the taxpayer.

When completed, Midland Metropolitan will be equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment, 15 operating theatres, and at least 669 beds. It will provide acute care for adults and children as well as maternity care and specialised surgery.

Ex-Carillion worker Rob Maiden said it was 'really frustrating' to see work at the Met grind to a halt

But the four year delay – originally the hospital was due to be handed over to the trust this month – will place added strain on the existing hospital services in the area.

Making the funding announcement, Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington said: "Following detailed negotiation, the Government is pleased to announce this package of support, in partnership with Birmingham and Sandwell NHS Trust, to ensure completion of this new hospital. Our priority through this process has been to keep public services running smoothly and safely. The plans we put in place have ensured this."

Hospital trust chief executive, Toby Lewis, said: "This is absolutely fantastic news. After a huge amount of work by teams across Whitehall and the Trust, and with the voices of local residents, clinicians, and stakeholders having been being clearly heard, we are delighted that we now have a definitive publicly financed plan."

Work on repairs and maintenance will start this autumn while the trust aims to have a main construction contractor appointed by November. Work on completing the hospital will then start next spring.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street said: "The collapse of Carillion left everybody involved in this project in a challenging situation. That we have successfully found a way forward is testament to the work of the trust, Government and local partners. It is really great news that residents in this part of the region will now get the hospital they deserve by 2022."

The leader of Sandwell Council, Councillor Steve Eling, said: "At last the Government has listened to what we've been saying. This was about to become a monument to government failure. Thanks goodness someone has finally seen the light after eight months. We look forward to working with the hospital trust to make this a success."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cannabis factory raided by police

MORE than 450 plants were uncovered from a large scale cannabis factory in a Black Country retail unit.

Officers from West Midlands Police raided an address in High Street, Smethwick, where a total of 469 cannabis plants were found. A police appeal has now been launched following the discovery, which took place at 9am last Tuesday.

A West Midlands Police spokesperson said: "Officers discovered 469 cannabis plants at an address in High Street, Smethwick. Enquiries are on-going and anyone with information is asked to call 101, quoting crime reference number 20SW/185747R/18."

Smoke bomb fan arrested at game

A FOOTBALL fan was arrested after setting off a smoke bomb at a match.

The Swansea City supporter has been warned he is now likely to be banned from football after the flare sent smoke billowing into the air at Birmingham City's St Andrews ground on Friday. The yob was arrested by police as the game finished goalless.

Police said on Twitter that the fan was identified and detained after reviewing CCTV.

"Whatever happens at court male will receive three-year club ban."

Bear Grylls invite for top students

THE Bear Grylls Adventure is giving away 2,018 free tickets to students celebrating three pass grades.

Students can come down and experience the attraction's Basecamp activity for free in the last two weeks of September, from Monday to Friday.

Bear Grylls said: "Life is much more than exam results - it is about grabbing opportunities and developing an adventure spirit to tackle life head on." Visit www.beargryllsadventure.com/birmingham/tickets/aLevel-Reward for further information and to book your free ticket.

Spate of vehicle crime overnight

A SPATE of vehicle crimes have hit an area in Streetly. In the most recent incidents, registration plates were stolen from a parked van in Inglewood Grove and a sat nav was stolen from a parked Ford Transit van 1.6 miles away in Aldridge Road.

Police have issued a warning after the incidents that took place overnight between Sunday and Monday. Anyone with information has been urged to contact police on 101.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Unexpected saviour brings hope to Beatties

WHEN questioned about allegations of Dickensian working conditions at his Sports Direct warehouse, Mike Ashley famously told MPs "I'm not Father Christmas. That came shortly after he had told them "you can't house train me."

Given that, many will understandably be sceptical that he is being touted as the knight in shining armour running to the rescue of Beatties.

But still, any port in a storm, and after spending £90 million buying the House of Fraser chain out of administration, Mr Ashley is at least making the right noises about keeping 80 per cent of its stores open, and turning it into the 'Harrods of the high street'.

Many will wonder why Mr Ashley has chosen to invest in such a risky venture at a time when people are said to be deserting the high street in droves. I suspect the purchase is far less about making money, and more about boosting his reputation. Saving a venerable department store chain with a rich history will give him a standing in the business world that no amount of discount sports wear ever will.

If this is the case, there is cause for hope. We all know Mike Ashley is not the sentimental type, but if he is looking at a bigger picture then that can only be a good thing.

As for turning House of Fraser into the Harrods of the high street, well I guess the proof will be in the pudding. If the new autumn collection consists of shell suits and Reeboks, I suspect some will consider it only a partial success.

❒❒❒

STAYING on the high street, it has been revealed that Dudley Council's coffers have taken a £500,000 hit since introducing free parking. Now, in the context of the average household budget, half a million pounds sounds like a lot. But when it comes to council finances, it is a drop in the ocean. About £1.60 per head, which seems pretty good value to me.

Certainly better value than the £6.7 million spent on the market place redevelopment a few years ago. And which do you think brings the most people into the town – free parking or block paving?

Yes the high street is still struggling, but imagine how many more businesses would have been lost were people still expected to pay for parking. And how much money would have been lost in business rates, dealing vandalism, fly posters and graffiti were it not for this modest expenditure?

The decision to provide shoppers with free parking in Dudley was a masterstroke. Maybe some of our other local authorities should follow suit.

Elba statesman – or is 45-year-old actor a solid Bond?

45-year-old Idris Elba, too old for Bond? Whisper it, but Roger Moore was older, aged 46!

Another troubling week for Jeremy Corbyn in the wake of more anti-semitism rumblings

Striking similarities to Jezzer – another Jeremy C, Clarkson, eventually kicked out by the Beeb

Wreathgate may lock Corbyn out for good

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

OFF to the pub for a steak which, in the latest fashion for bizarre methods of serving (chips in buckets, etc), came on a waxed napkin on a breadboard. It was almost impossible to eat because each mouthful of steak contained a serving of napkin but the staff look horrified when I asked them to put it on a proper plate. A reader tells me he was once served a bread roll in a carpet slipper. Any other weird dining experiences welcome.

THE perils of family trees. A reader revisited her home town and called at the local museum in the hope of discovering famous or distinguished relatives. She found a display board used in an exhibition a couple of years ago featuring a Victorian photograph showing her great-great uncle. It should have been a proud moment but the text revealed that "unfortunately his nickname in the village was Farty because his initials were WC". Never meet your heroes.

I SUGGESTED that Idris Elba, now 45, might be a tad old to be embarking on a career as James Bond. A reader points out that the present incumbent, Daniel Craig, is 50. Maybe so. But when he took over the 007 mantle in 2005 Craig was a spry young 37. In Ian Fleming's books, Bond's age is not revealed, and he never ages. However there is a clue in one passage referring to the secret-service retirement age which suggests he is 37.

IN a perfect world for Corbynism, this torrid week of Wreathgate would end with the discovery of Jeremy's Secret Photo Album and all the wicked smears would vanish. Comrade Jez's stock response when challenged about meeting Irish or Middle Eastern terrorists is to put on his most pious expression and say he wants an end to all violence. He does not need to condemn IRA murders because he condemns all murders. He does not need to condemn Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel because he condemns all attacks. He would have us believe he is reaching out to all in the quest for peace. As he said of the Tunisia affair: "I was there because I wanted to see a fitting memorial to everyone who has died in every terrorist incident everywhere because we have to end it. You cannot pursue peace by a cycle of violence; the only way you can pursue peace is by a cycle of dialogue."

SOUNDS terrific, doesn't it? But where, exactly, is the dialogue? How much time has Jeremy Corbyn spent talking to the other sides? Where are the photos of this saintly allotment keeper meeting Israeli families bereaved by Palestinian killers? Where are the pictures of him shaking hands with Protestant paramilitaries in Ulster or comforting those maimed by IRA bombs? Maybe all those images are tucked away in Jeremy's Secret Photo Album. Or maybe not.

A TALE of two Jeremys...The potentially disastrous Wreathgate saga reminds me of Jeremy Clarkson who, having a certain charisma and lots of fans, got away with mistake after mistake until one night he called his producer a "lazy Irish ****" and punched him. That was the tipping point, the end of Clarkson at the Beeb and I suspect we are nearing the end of Corbyn. This prospect may scare his supporters but it terrifies the Tories.

WHY are we waiting? According to the latest reports, police have CCTV footage of suspects in the Salisbury nerve-agent incidents. So why have they not released it? CCTV captures only a moment in time. Figuring out where those people were, and what they did, before or after the filming is crucial and Joe Public may have the answers. So why can't Joe Public see the footage?

AND here's another Salisbury puzzle. Cops seem to have assumed that the bottle allegedly containing the Novichok agent and found in a local park was the only bottle used. For all we know, a second or third bottle may be lying undiscovered or, worse, sitting on somebody's mantelpiece. Again, releasing an image of the discovered bottle might jog someone's memory. But no images have been shown. It is all very odd.

OH, brave new world. My eye was caught by a feature about a new "switching glass" window which can be installed in your bathroom. Flick a switch and it turns from clear to opaque, so you cannot be seen, even if passers-by or your neighbours are just a few feet away. As long as the power is on, your privacy is guaranteed. What could possibly go wrong? You switch on the light, the window goes blank. You disrobe and relax in the bath. You fall asleep. There is a power cut . . .

THIS week's hot news from the world of medical research is that salt is not as harmful as the experts thought last week but vaping is more harmful than the experts thought last week. Anyone care to guess what next week will bring?

TALKING POINT

Weight for it! It's time to accept I'm a fattie

PASS me the chocolate biscuits, I've decided, once and for all to accept my fate, I have no option but to realise I will be an overweight person for the rest of my days on this planet. It's an unfortunate, but necessary admission, for the sake of my sanity.

Yep, the size 32in-waist jeans that looked so good five years ago, are bound for the charity shop, unless I append them with some kind of industrial-strength fastener, but then movement would become difficult and sitting down, impossible.

Recently – as I suffer the catch-up effects of a life of relative contentment, via the occasional pint and kebab/Indian/pizza, etc – things seem to have taken a turn for the worse. It's a difficult situation to come to terms with. When trying on new clothes in a store's changing rooms and being horrified at what you see before you, it's so easy to blame the mirror. Then spend the rest of the day shying away from reflections, neck-down anyway, after landing back home.

You talk things over with your other half, say you're worried about how much weight you're putting on, and then they very helpfully show you a photograph of you from a year ago, which shows the double chins, paunch and general rosy-cheeked glow of a chubby 50-something. Great, thanks for that!

In a light bulb moment, I think it might be something to do with a new inhaler for my asthma, Symbicort, and seeking some kind of vindication, of course I turn to the internet. I search for Symbicort and on entering the 'w' for weight gain, up comes a lengthy list of people who seem to think the drug is the cause for their own expanding waistline!

Armed with this erm... foolproof evidence, I then tackle my GP on the issue and it's not hard to see her difficulty in trying to maintain a straight face. Blood tests follow to investigate the possibility of an underactive thyroid, and cholesterol levels – all to no avail.

So it seems, lifestyle needs to be looked at. I dig out that book my missus bought me (again, thanks!) by a certain lifestyle guru, with advice on workouts and diet, and it soon occurs to me that he (hairy pretty boy with biceps, you know who I mean!) must be in league with a leading supermarket, as all the recipes have the most hard to find ingredients, which will cost an absolute fortune to buy!

It seems everybody these days is on the take. Come the revolution, us fatties will line him and his ilk up against the wall and force-feed them cream cakes, beer and French cheese until they are like the rest of us...

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PC attitudes have ruined our backbone

WE are, at present, running around like headless chickens seeking answers to our present day vexations when the explanation is under our noses. Political Correctness – a brigade that has ruined the moral compass and backbone of this country.

We have 'children' charged with vicious crimes and even murder who cannot be named, why not? Gangs of feral teens dominating our streets.

Children experience no discipline in their lives often spending hours on their consoles playing extreme killing games, what do we expect? Parents cannot chastise their offspring and neither can teachers, so they grow up without any restraints, wanting respect for themselves but not willing to allow others the same prerogative.

Our legal profession has also been infiltrated with murder charges being changed to manslaughter and ridiculously lenient sentences awarded by a feeble judiciary. Several people have been murdered by people allowed out on parole. I do not entirely blame these boards as their decisions have also been shaped by the same laissez faire attitude. The guilty are incarcerated in five-star prisons and live a luxurious life at our expense in which they boast 'that they can earn more selling drugs in a month than their keepers earn in a year'. It really is time that we stopped 'featherbedding' people, and our anxieties, and took a firm stand against the PC contingent. I am not promoting a return to Victorian values, but would like to see a change of attitude where children are disciplined and prisoners serve a proper 'sentence' rather than enjoy a holiday at public expense.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN
Great Barr

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Sandwell Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
graeme.andrew@expressandstar.co.uk

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Help sight charity in research

FIGHT for Sight is launching a campaign to raise awareness of eye health and the desperate need for more research funding.

Very many people of my age are starting to have difficulty with their sight and right now there are over two million people in the UK affected by sight loss – a figure set to double by 2050.

The answer lies in research. Breakthroughs have already led to pioneering treatments – for example, cataract surgery which today takes just 20 minutes and benefits hundreds of thousands of people every year. However, eye research remains woefully underfunded.

A Fight for Sight review shows that just one per cent of public grant funding went to this area last year. I hope others will join me this week in supporting Fight for Sight to achieve the next breakthrough.

RT HON. BARONESS BETTY BOOTHROYD
House of Lords

One law for police and another for us?

IT seems the police are so underfunded and understaffed that some crimes have little chance of being investigated.

I now see a woman detective chief inspector has been racially abused by being told to go back to Africa.

The alleged culprit was arrested.

Race hate crime is evil and may the culprit, if guilty, be punished.

Then again, when the police do not have resources for other crimes, I do hope the DCI was not burgled in her absence; she may find no officer is available.

Or now is there one law for the police and another for us mere mortals?

Mind how you go.

ROBERT WILLIAM WHITE
Wigmore

Fed up of adverts on the Beeb

WELL having watched a fair bit of BBC television I cannot help but notice the adverts we get between every programme.

It can be a break of anything from two to five minutes with no adverts for Gibbs SR toothpaste, or the cleaner that beats as it sweeps as it cleans, it all leaves me a bit Confused.com. No the BBC have adverts for iPlayer, apps, 'Get Inspired' and radio.

Then of course the television tax itself has its own advert. It must be the only tax in the country that has a television advert all paid for by us the television tax payer or a do they prefer television licence holders. Yes it is time to pull the plug on the BBC finances. If they are as good as director general Tony Hall appears to think, let him put his money where his mouth his is, that is anybody at the BBC who has any money left after the Cliff Richard fiasco.

EWART J JOHNSON
Warley

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Ministers to look at loophole of knife sales

A LOOPHOLE allowing the sale of deadly knives on the high street is to be looked into by Government ministers as a result of an investigation by The Chronicle's sister paper, the Express & Star.

Crime Minister Victoria Atkins has launched the inquiry after images of blades purchased legally in Wolverhampton, which featured in newspaper reports, were sent to her.

The blades, although similar to the banned zombie knives, can be sold because they do not feature images or words which suggest violence.

But they can be just as lethal, and purchased for under £20 from shops in the Black Country.

A petition for a review into legislation on the sale of knives has been signed by almost 6,000 people.

In a letter to West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson, Ms Atkins said: "The definition of zombie knives identifies the most common characteristics of these knives and what distinguishes them from other knives and makes them particularly harmful.

"We considered the criteria needed to describe an item as a zombie knife very carefully and if we wanted to remove the third element of the definition, that the weapon includes images or words that suggest it is to be used for the purposes of violence.

"However, I am concerned by the images you have provided and I have asked my officials to consider this issue further."

Mr Jamieson, who has backed the campaign, said: "I am pleased the Home Office are taking this issue seriously and are looking closely at my proposals. These knives have no practical use. The only purpose they have is to injure and kill."

Watson defends Royal Mail after service gets £50m fine

LABOUR deputy leader Tom Watson has leapt to the defence of the Royal Mail after the delivery service was fined a record £50 million for breaching competition law.

Ofcom said the company had discriminated against its only major delivery rival by penalising wholesale customers that sought to deliver bulk mail such as bank statements and council tax demands. The penalty followed an investigation into a complaint by rival Whistl.

The firm had complained about changes Royal Mail made to wholesale customer contracts in early 2014, including price increases. Ofcom said Royal Mail abused its 'dominant position'.

However, Mr Watson, who is also Shadow Culture Secretary and MP for West Bromwich East, insisted the ruling was unfair. He said: "The decision to fine Royal Mail is without merit and amounts to an attack on a unionised universal service provider. It's free market dogma that has allowed this to happen and a future Labour Government will put the matter right."

At the time, Whistl was expanding its business to compete directly with Royal Mail by employing workers to deliver letters in parts of the UK. Previously the company, known as TNT at the time, had collected and carried out an initial sort of the letters before handing them all to Royal Mail for a final sort and delivery.

Ofcom said Royal Mail increased prices for competitors that did not reach volume targets for the whole of the UK. This meant any competitor employing its own delivery workers in certain parts of the country, as Whistl did, would have to pay higher prices in areas where it used Royal Mail.

Jonathan Oxley, Ofcom's competition director, said: "Royal Mail broke the law by abusing its dominant position in bulk mail delivery."

Listed swimming baths to remain open

The much-loved community pool, catering for residents of Balsall Heath and surrounding areas

A GRADE-II listed swimming baths is to remain open after a cash injection of more than £74,000. Swimmers will now be able to continue using Moseley Road Baths after its charity arm was granted a total of £74,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The HLF's Resilient Heritage programme has seen that funding is in place to pay for a business development manager and a volunteer development manager at the charity.

Funds will also cover the costs of a new pool cover at the baths and lifeguard training courses, which will help members of the community develop their skills and gain the necessary qualifications.

Karen Leach, chair of the charity, said: "We are thrilled to have received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and see this as an important step in making swimming at Moseley Road Baths fit for the future. This wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication of volunteer fundraisers and much appreciated assistance from the National Trust."

HLF bosses said they were delighted to support the charity, with funds now set to see The Edwardian baths also receive energy saving equipment.

Vanessa Harbar, head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "We are delighted to support this project."

Warning is issued over cold callers

COUNCIL bosses have urged the public to warn the elderly and vulnerable after cold callers were spotted in Tipton. Sandwell Council Trading Standards were made aware of two males cold calling in the Attwell Road, Richards Road and Turton Road area of Princes End last week.

Public health chief, Councillor Elaine Costigan, said: "They apparently wouldn't take no for an answer, even though residents told them they were council tenants and that they didn't want or need any work doing.

"It's worth warning elderly and vulnerable friends and family members not to open the door to these people.

"Council staff will always carry identification and genuine builders will never cold call looking for work – only use trusted tradesmen and never take up offers from cold callers."

Those concerned about cold callers should call 08454 040506.

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Shamed teen football players spared lock-up

TWO shamed teenage footballers involved in a 'disgraceful' attack on the opposition's star player have been spared detention because it could have ruined their lives.

Jahn Chohan and Morgan McKensie deliberately targeted 17-year-old Lewis Owen with just minutes to go in the Sunday League clash, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Their team – Perrywoods United – was being thrashed 5-2 by Kewford Eagles, from Kingswinford, at Hadley Stadium in Wilson Road, Smethwick when the pair, both aged 17 at the time, struck on November 20, 2016, it was said.

The victim had two teeth driven into his gum by a flurry of punches and was stamped on during the attack. He now faces operations to replace two or three of his teeth at £2,000-a-time, said Mr Charles Hamer, prosecuting. The defendants, now both 19, claimed that each acted in over zealous self-defence but were each convicted of violent disorder after a trial. A third defendant was acquitted.

Mr Simon Phillips, defending Chohan, who was of previous good character, insisted: "This was a spur of the moment incident and completely out of character."

Mr Charles Cronin, representing McKensie, also with no previous conviction, said: "There was some confusion as to what actually led to this incident starting but it was not premeditated."

Chohan from Greenhill Road, Halesowen and McKensie of St Kenelms Avenue, Halesowen were each given nine months detention at a Young Offenders Institution suspended for 18 months with 150 hours unpaid work and an order for each to pay £2,000 compensation.

Recorder Edward Coke told the pair, who both have university places: "What you did represented the worst aspects of football."

Fin-tastic news of arrival

The baby blackchin guitarfish at the National Sea Life Centre

A RARE and endangered Blackchin Guitarfish has been born at Birmingham's National Sea Life Centre – believed to be the UK's first breeding success for the species.

The baby male was found happily swimming around the sea floor in the aquarium's Shark Lagoon by members of the animal care team. At just 32cm long, the little fish has a lot of growing to do – with adult Blackchin Guitarfish growing up to 1.8m long.

Aquarium curator, Jonny Rudd, said: "The team here are all buzzing, we've been working really hard to make sure the environment is just right for breeding. The new baby is currently living in a specialist nursery space where we'll be keeping a constant eye on him to see how he's progressing."

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Protesters to hold 'funeral' on shops bid

CAMPAIGNERS fighting a proposed shopping development in Oldbury plan to hold a 'mock funeral' in protest. Members of The Save Lion Farm Fields group are planning to carry a coffin half a mile from playing fields on Newbury Lane, to highlight their fight against the controversial £200 million scheme.

The proposal, put forward by Jeremy George Knight-Adams Plc, includes plans to build a 200,000 square feet shopping centre on the Sandwell Council-owned land.

The company said the new scheme could create 2,000 jobs. Opponents have claimed residents have been kept in the dark about the scheme, a claim strongly refuted by the local authority, which added that the proposal has been published in the local press and discussed at public meetings.

Pollution

Pete Durnell, chairman of the campaign, said on the group's Facebook page: "The purpose of our procession will be to mark the potential death, if this crazy development goes ahead, of wildlife, local people. The area is already heavily polluted, more traffic means more pollution – and the loss of our local football league – the loss of 12 football pitches."

In June the group staged a 'human chain' protest on the playing fields, which attracted 200 people.

Brian Crockett told a recent meeting of Sandwell Council's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee residents feared if the development went ahead, there would be traffic problems, increased air pollution from cars and the loss of the playing fields. He said: "We have great concerns of the development leaving Sandwell with no fields and possibly no retail park."

Councillors at the meeting were reassured any proposed development would go to public consultation.

The 'funeral' is planned to take place on Sunday, September 9.

Bus timetable shake-up to see changes in borough

A MAJOR shake-up of bus routes and timetables will see services carved up across Dudley and Sandwell. National Express has unveiled a raft of new timetables which it claims will make bus services more reliable.

The changes to 29 services will see some routes axed to make way for new buses, while commuters will see changes brought in to other existing services. National Express said: "Following an extensive public consultation, we are making a number of changes to bus routes in the Dudley and Sandwell area from Sunday, September 2. This will include minor changes, such as timetable improvements, to help our services run more reliably.

By Luke Bartlett

"New express services and new links will be introduced, with our Platinum buses able to serve more areas, including Blackheath, Oldbury and Smethwick."

Changes will be made to the 4H service through Hayley Green and Halesowen to Walsall, with a new timetable during the evenings and on Sundays.

Route 9, from Stourbridge to Birmingham via Halesowen, will see buses run up to every five minutes along Hagley Road between Quinton and Birmingham.

Extra time will be added to allow buses to recover more easily from delays and there will be 'better spaced' buses, National Express said.

The company's route 13 from Dudley to Walsall will now be known as the 11A, while timetable changes will be made to 27, 27A and 82.

Routes 120, 121 and 120 A will be replaced with four new, modified routes for West Bromwich and Oldbury. Buses will run up to every 15 minutes between the town and Blackheath, and every 30 minutes to Merry Hill. Rowley Regis Hospital will no longer be served by the 3 service but the 4M service will continue to stop at the hospital, running up to every 20 minutes. Passengers will also be unable to travel directly from Lion Farm to Birmingham and will instead have to change in Oldbury, along with residents travelling to West Bromwich from Oakham.

The new X7 will offer an express service from Dudley to Birmingham, which will mean fast links from City Hospital to Oldbury, Dudley and Wolverhampton.

The new X8 service will see buses run up to every 20 minutes, which will mean more buses for passengers between Dudley, Springfield, Blackheath and Birmingham.

Passengers will see the current 127 service, replaced with new, modified routes - with the 13A running from Blackheath to Birmingham via Brandhall and Warley and the 14 running from Dudley to Halesowen via Blackheath.

Route 128 will change to the 13 service, with more buses from Warley to Oldbury every 20 minutes.

National Express said residents will see its route 289 replaced with the new 3 and 3A services from West Bromwich, while the X10 route will have changes to its timetable.

Open day inspires the next generation

MP Mike Wood , Julian Turner (Chief Executive), Frank Turner (Westfield Chairman), Harry Myhill, aged 12 and Millie Bell, nine

A BLACK Country sports car manufacturer looked to inspire budding engineers at an open day.

Westfield Sports Cars saw more than 50 children, parents and carers arrive at its headquarters in Kingswinford to learn more about the industry.

Enthusiastic youngsters got to get to grips with the manufacturer's work and engage with a whole host of cars, pods and other technologies during their visit.

Wendy Rayner-Hall, Westfield's programme manager, said: "It was about inspiring the next generation of engineers. We had lots of things going on.

"We had the large pods, which are driver-less vehicles that have four people go inside. We had them running around Greenwich earlier this year.

"They also got to experience the sports car side of the business. Those that came were extremely interested in engineering and were engaged."

The event came as part of the Institution of Engineering and Technology's bid to get organisations across the UK to open their doors to parents and children.

The event, which took place at the start of this month, also saw involvement from Dudley MP Mike Wood who said: "It was fantastic to see so many young people engaging with the range of cars, pods and other technology on show at Westfield Sports Cars."

ADVERTISEMENT

A new life

Retired nurse Sheila got a new smile after a year of dental misery, husband Dave admits he too is now enjoying the life changes it's brought about.

When former specialist nurse Sheila Haycock finally found a solution for her failing teeth she quite literally received a prescription for a new life . . . and so did her husband, Dave.

Emotionally broken by a catalogue of dental disasters, for a whole year she suffered pain every day and her confidence plummeted. "Each day was a nightmare.

"Every day I'd have a new ulcer in my mouth. I couldn't eat properly, stopped going out and couldn't face looking at myself in a mirror – in fact, I'd cover them up.

"I'd speak and laugh with my hand in front of my mouth, avoid having my picture taken and couldn't chew properly – if I did go out, I'd always have to order lasagne because it was soft food," she recalls.

Terrified of dentist

Sheila's problems began when her natural teeth became mobile and braved her worst fears, having a full clearance to make way for an upper and lower denture.

Terrified of the dentist, she adds: "I thought it was impossible for things to get worse, but nothing could have prepared me for the next 12 months. The first time I took my teeth out and looked in the mirror, psychologically, I was beside myself.

Sheila and Dave Haycock - a new outlook on life

"I'd been so preoccupied with mastering my fear of the dentist, I hadn't worked through the impact of losing my teeth would have on me. It was devastating."

Initially, Dave confesses to "not being that helpful," explaining her native teeth "needed to go and to deal with it."

"I know, I told him," says Sheila, "but they were mine!"

Even the loss of a single tooth is now clinically recognised as a potential precursor for a mourning process.

Adds Dave: "She was upset and I felt utterly helpless. The guilt of it all . . .

I wanted to help, but couldn't. I could eat what ever I wanted, but she couldn't and every day – every day – there was a new problem to address."

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- Roy Phillpott

Steven's professionalism gave me the confidence and assurance that they could resolve my problem.
- Norma Aston

When I first saw my teeth I thought they looked just like my real teeth.
- Vicki Ball

Sheila, who specialised in wound dressings, admits she felt trapped, having been assured her jawbone density would be too poor to support implants.

"My dentures seemed to be rotating and rolling around and I hated the denture glue. I'd use it and as soon as I'd try to eat something, within 15 minutes my teeth would be unstable again. I was mortified having to use it over and over again. I was not coping."

Taking advice from her daughter, who had received a recommendation from a work colleague that North Street Dental and Implant Clinic could help, Sheila headed for Dudley.

"Within 15 minutes of walking in to the surgery Steven [practice principal Steven Burchell DipCDT RCS(Eng)] was helping me," she says.

As a temporary measure, an oral impression was taken and her painful dentures lined with a soft material that would help ease the discomfort and improve fit.

'Own teeth'

Sheila was prescribed a traditional top prosthetic and a lower over-denture, retained on two implants. The surgery was carried out under sedation by North Street's clinical lead, Owain Rees BDS DGDP(UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC61576.

"All I can say is that it has completely changed my life. There's nothing I can't eat and the implant prosthetic doesn't feel false. It's comparable for me to my own teeth. When I first saw my new teeth in the mirror, I thought who's this person? They looked natural, just like real teeth," says Sheila.

Dave, a former civil engineer, adds: "She's completely different. It's been life-changing for me too and we can now get on with our retirement."

Both keen gardeners, they agree the financial investment is in a quality life choice."It's the best thing she's ever had done," adds Dave.

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NHS launch of trauma sites saves 1,600 lives

MORE than 1,600 lives have been saved since the launch of NHS major trauma centres six years ago, new figures have revealed.

The 27 designated major trauma centres have been operating at hospitals across the UK since April 2012, playing a vital role in saving the lives of victims of knife, gun and acid attack crimes.

They see seriously injured patients sent directly to the designated major trauma centres, bypassing smaller, local hospitals that offered less specialist care.

People who are seriously injured in stabbings or road crashes in the Black Country are normally flown or driven to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital, one of the major trauma centres.

Victims in Staffordshire can also be taken to the trauma unit at the Royal Stoke Hospital, while, in some cases, seriously hurt children are directed to Birmingham Children's Hospital. Experts said 1,656 people who would 'probably have died' had been saved by being taken directly to hospitals better equipped to deal with life-threatening injuries.

Analysis

An independent report showed patients also spent fewer days in hospital and had improved quality of life after receiving critical care.

The analysis of more than 110,000 patients admitted to 35 hospitals between 2008 and 2017 shows an increase of nearly a fifth in the odds of survival from severe injury in the five years from 2012.

Researchers calculated there were 595 additional survivors in 2017 – five years after the new system started – so they are ahead of the target for the eventual 450 to 600 additional survivors that NHS England predicted when the reorganisation was announced.

The report was compiled by the Trauma Audit and Research Network (TARN) based at the University of Manchester and supported by experts at the Universities of Leicester and Sheffield.

Timothy Coats, professor of emergency medicine at the University of Leicester and consultant in emergency medicine at Leicester's hospitals, described the new system as a 'fantastic achievement'.

Firms ready for business festival start

PREPARATIONS for the 2019 Black Country Business Festival are in full swing, with a number of sponsorship deals already signed.

The festival, taking place from May 13-24, has been established by the Black Country Chamber of Commerc, needs sponsors and partners to make it happen.

Already, Black Country solicitors Talbots Law; accident repair centre BodyKraft; and DY5 – Dudley's Business and Innovation Enterprise Zone – have signed up to be partners. Casino 36 is a sponsor and official supporters include Wolverhampton Racecourse, accountancy firm Crowe UK and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

Corin Crane, chief executive of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said: "The 2019 business festival has got off to a great start and I personally want to thank all those partners, sponsors and supporters that have already pledged their support.

"But we have some way to go. The chamber set up the business festival last year to enhance growth and investment in the region. It is a once-a-year opportunity for the region to come together to engage, share best practice and collaborate on a completely new level and we are looking for the business community to get behind the festival again.

"This was one of our new initiatives to reinforce our ambition to show local businesses that we are a proactive, forward-thinking and trustworthy organisation that can offer the support that they need to thrive."

For more information, visit www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com, email hello@blackcountrybusinessfes tival.com or call 01902 912304.

Car smashes into ambulance after motorist falls asleep at the wheel on Aston Expressway

The ambulance, left damaged

Report by Richard Guttridge

A CAR veered onto the opposite side of the carriageway on a busy route and crashed into an ambulance after the driver fell asleep at the wheel.

Police said the driver was lucky to escape with only minor injuries following the crash on the A38 Aston Expressway in Birmingham. The car sustained serious damage to its front end, while the ambulance was left with a large dent on one side after the crash which took place at around 6.30am on Sunday

The incident prompted a warning from police for motorists not to drive when they were feeling tired. Only the car and ambulance were involved in the crash on the main road connecting the M6 and the centre of Birmingham and no-one was badly hurt.

Blocked

Motorway police praised the quick-thinking actions of ambulance driver in avoiding a major collision.

The road was blocked heading away from the city following the crash

At the time, the Central Motorway Policing Group (CMPG) said on Twitter: "Please please do not drive tired.

"A car driver fell asleep at the wheel drive on A38M and crossed to the opposite side and collided with an ambulance. Lucky minor injury but it could of been a lot worse if not for quick actions of the ambulance driver."

Aston Fire Station tweeted: "RTC on Aston Expressway involving one car and one ambulance. Four people involved."

The site of the crash is a short distance from where six people were killed in a horror crash on Belgrave Middleway last year.

The scene at Aston Expressway

Large family forced to leave flat now live 120 miles away

Report by Megan Archer

A FAMILY of 11 have spent months living in cramped hotels up to 100 miles from their Black County home after being illegally evicted from their privately-rented flat.

Severe leaking and electrical faults forced Simone and Ansar Hussain from Great Barr to take their nine children to hotels as far away as Bristol as they waited to be rehoused.

Now the family live in three apartment blocks in the centre of Bristol and say they are at 'breaking point' as their wait reaches 65 days.

The family – who receive more than £20,000 a year in child tax credit – say they were forced out of their home in Rowdale Road on June 13 after their three-bed property was deemed unsafe to live in.

They were sent to a Travelodge in Burton-upon-Trent but continued the daily 42-mile school run trip to Great Barr.

After a month in Burton they were then moved on to another Travelodge – this time in Rugeley in Staffordshire. And following 28 days there, they were then sent 120 miles away to apartments in the middle of Bristol city centre where they remain.

Crying

The Hussains were hopeful they would return to Great Barr by next week, but, according to the family, have now been told it is looking like the end of September instead.

Birmingham City Council confirmed the family are on the housing register at the highest priority banding, but 'there are very few six-bedroom properties available.'

Simone, age 39, told South West News Service: "I'm crying almost all the time now.

"We've got our nine kids with us which is hard and my 17-month-old is struggling to sleep. My other kids are four, six, eight, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 19. I've got a 21-year-old daughter back home too in Coleshill who I haven't seen since this all started in June and that upsets me. Travelodges were horrible. You don't have a kitchen so we couldn't cook. Eating out is extortionate. I kept having to borrow and borrow money.

"The kids are away from their friends all of the time. It's just depressing and not fair on them. The apartments down here are better because I can cook now and get some shopping in and stuff but, as a family, we're spread across three apartments.

"We're sweating now as well because the new school year is around the corner and I've got to get school uniforms. How am I meant to do that?"

Growing interest for children in special project

Councillors Syeda Khatun and Ann Jarvis, town lead for Tipton with volunteers and young people at the Kabbages and Kidz project

CHILDREN in Great Bridge have been getting the chance to enjoy growing some vegetables and flowers at a special project in Farley Park.

The sessions – named Kabbages and Kidz – have been organised by Farley Community Allotment and the Great Bridge Community Forum. The 40 young people, aged between 5-14 years attend the after-school club and holiday play scheme at Farley Park Lodge.

And now the scheme has had a welcome boost of £836 thanks to Sandwell Council's town grants scheme.

Maureen Whitehouse, chair of the Great Bridge Community Forum, said: "It has been great to work with June Beighton, John Farley and Anthony Whitehouse, the lead volunteers at Farley Community Allotment.

"They have worked hard to get the allotment where it is today. We were so pleased when they approached us wanting to work with our children.

"We've also incorporated visits from Sandwell's Eco Bus to enhance the project and compliment the work the children are doing on the allotment."

Councillor Syeda Khatun, deputy leader of Sandwell Council, called in to meet the young growers and to see their work.

"It was really good to get along and see the children who may not have had the opportunity to grow vegetables and plants before," she said. "So they have been given the opportunity to plant seeds and take care of the plants and to see how they are cooked after harvesting," she added.

The grant has been used to buy a polytunnel to provide shelter and workspace for the children and gardening equipment.

The Great Bridge Community Forum, which has been operating for more than 20 years, works with people aged five to 80-plus, offers a wide range of activities, including play schemes, walking groups and special sports and social events for adults with physical and learning difficulties.

Tower plan to accommodate homeless families passed

CONTROVERSIAL plans to convert a crime-plagued tower block into temporary accommodation for homeless families have been approved.

Members of Birmingham City Council's planning committee said the Barry Jackson tower scheme in Aston was 'far from ideal' but 'probably the best option' due to the 'housing crisis' facing the city.

But some members refused to back the plans and said the scheme was inappropriate for families and children as with inadequate parking facilities.

The high-rise at Estone Walk will accommodate up to 544 people for up to four months while permanent housing applications are processed.

The council project, which is to be delivered by Wates Living Space, has been vehemently opposed locally, with nearly 400 people lodging formal objections made.

A number of petitions have also been launched by local residents.

The 20-floor tower, notorious in the area for anti-social behaviour, had originally been condemned by the council.

Resident Dorothy Gerald said the block had been a 'blight' on Aston for years and argued the proposal would be a 'magnet' for crime once more in the area.

Making the case for the conversion, the council's head of housing options Jim Kershaw described it as 'key' and said there were more than 2,000 people in temporary accommodation including around 500 in bed and breakfasts.

Councillor Gareth Moore argued it was not the 'right solution' to put families, particularly children, in high-rises and added he was familiar with issues in tower blocks in his Erdington ward.

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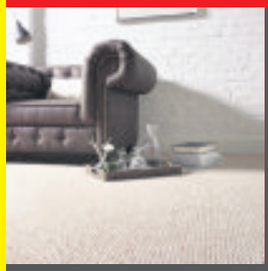

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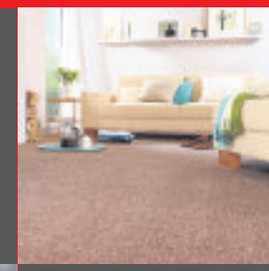

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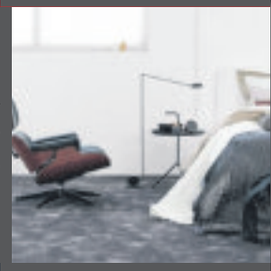

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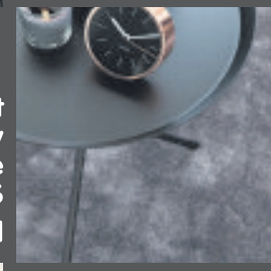

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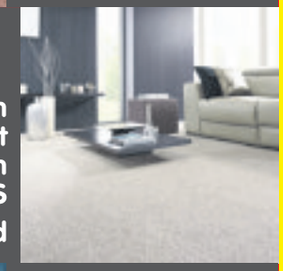

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Firm's staff step out to raise £6,000

Solvay staff present the cheque

A HOSPITAL charity has received a £6,000 cash injection following fundraising efforts from an Oldbury chemical firm.

Staff from Solvay raised thousands for The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Charity braving a challenging 24-mile trek across the Yorkshire Moors. The funding improve the charity's Elderly Care Appeal and be used to buy MyLife systems – interactive units that run entertainment software specifically designed for people with dementia.

Solvay worker, Vic Walters said: "Several members of our walking team have relatives who have been diagnosed with dementia, hence the Elderly Care Appeal is a cause that is close to their hearts."

The MyLife units, which contain a wide range of therapeutic tools and memory-related activities, will come as part of the Elderly Care Appeal's aims to bring interactive software and other activities to elderly care wards at the Queen Elizabeth.

Three other hospitals will also all benefit from the campaign – Heartlands, Solihull and Good Hope. Fundraiser Rachel Learmonth said: "The money will be invested in My Life interactive software, which provides valuable therapy by helping staff to stimulate conversations that can aid memory for dementia patients."

FOCUS ON OLDBURY

Store safe as Homebase swings axe on 42 outlets

THE Oldbury store has escaped the axe as Homebase pressed ahead with a wave of closures that will see 42 DIY outlets shut, putting around 1,500 jobs at risk.

Further afield Solihull and Droitwich will lose their branches in the latest cull, but the stores in Oldbury, and nearby Wolverhampton, Cannock, Kidderminster, Telford and Birmingham have all been spared.

The retailer is closing the stores via a Company Voluntary Arrangement, an insolvency procedure used by struggling firms to shut under-performing shops.

Homebase boss Damian McGloughlin said: "Launching a CVA has been a difficult decision and one that we have not taken lightly.

"Homebase has been one of the most recognisable retail brands for almost 40 years, but the reality is we need to continue to take decisive action to address the under-performance of the business and deal with the burden of our cost base, as well as to protect thousands of jobs. The CVA is therefore an essential measure for the business to take and will enable us to refocus our operations and rebuild our offer for the years ahead."

The firm said it would try to redeploy affected staff. The CVA will require the support of landlords.

It was reported in June that Homebase was exploring further store closures through the procedure. The latest restructuring would come on top of a store closure programme being carried out since February.

Sixteen Homebase stores have been shut this year and the business has also axed 303 jobs at its head office in Milton Keynes. Homebase could see some resistance from landlords to the CVA, with the property industry expressing disdain for the procedure, saying it leaves them out-of-pocket.

Safe – the Wolverhampton Homebase

CVAs have been adopted by a host of retailers including New Look, Carpetright and Mothercare.

The Homebase store closures follow the sale of the business earlier this year by its former Australian owner Wesfarmers to Hilco, a retail turnaround specialist, for £1. Homebase was bought by Wesfarmers for £340 million in 2016.

Youngsters hooked on pirate fun

Olivia Mole, aged four, from Oldbury joins in the pirate fun at the Manor House Museum

ARRR matey! A West Midlands museum saw almost 200 people turn out in their best pirate outfits.

The Manor House Museum in West Bromwich saw crowds of children and parents visit the venue's Jolly Roger's Pirate Party.

Children got to dress up as pirates and enjoy playing in the sand at the venue's beach as part of the museum's latest summer event.

Manor House Museum's Emily Westley, aged 20, from Walsall, said: "We had quite a few people here today, it went really well.

"We had almost 200 people in, there were lots of children with their parents. They really seemed to enjoy it.

Digital VAT help for firms

NATIONAL audit, tax, advisory and risk firm Crowe is preparing to help Midlands business get ready for the introduction of Making Tax Digital which will be introduced for VAT returns from April 1.

The firm is holding a webinar on Thursday, September 6, the first step in a campaign running throughout the autumn to help businesses prepare.

Keri Pay, VAT Partner in the Midlands office of Crowe in Oldbury, said: "We know that very few businesses are prepared for the switch. MTD is an initiative which is intended to minimise the tax loss from fraud and errors in the current system, and it begins on 1 April 2019 for VAT-registered businesses.

"Businesses with a turnover in respect of VATable supplies above the threshold of £85,000 will have to keep digital records and submit VAT returns using compatible software. Other elements of MTD, such as income tax and corporation tax, have been placed on hold until April 2020."

Crowe will be following up the webinar, which after September 6 will be available to view on their website, with in-house briefings and training for clients throughout the Midlands."

For further details of Crowe UK's MTD4V campaign, or to receive details of access to the webinar, please email keri.pay@crowe.co.uk, for details.

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The business moved to its present base 20 years ago. Carera offer a full range of windows and doors and also install a full range of conservatories, orangeries and living spaces.

Happy

The company prides itself on having a depth of knowledge in all aspects of the products it offers and industry regulations. The company is fully conversant with all current regulations within the industry. A key aim is to provide a level of customer service that is second to none. More than 70 per cent of all Carera Windows' home sales come via personal recommendation from happy clients, which number many thousands. It takes pride in completing every project to the highest standard.

From the start, Carera is committed to offering only top-quality products, expert installations and unbeatable personal service to both private and commercial customers. Its experienced team is committed to working closely with local authorities, education authorities, landlords, architects and contractors on its commercial work. Carera Windows is keen to get involved in any kind of commercial project from industrial units to office conversions, new build to refurbishments and renovations.

The company's showroom at its base is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm and Saturday, 10am to 4pm. It offers a wide range of products in various sizes and colours, manufactured using PVCu, aluminium, GRP and hardwood. Carera also installs entrance doors, sliding patio doors, french double doors and porches.

Carera Windows was started by owner and managing director Mark Crumpton in 1989, originally from home as a small enterprising double glazing company supplying the local area. Its housing association glazing contracts and commercial premises work now also takes the business across the country. Carera prides itself on offering honest and professional expert advice, installing 100 per cent high quality products, sensible prices and outstanding customer service.

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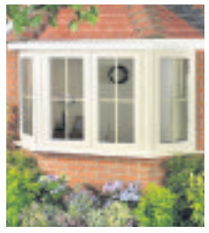

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Exam success for youngest councillor, 18

THE West Midlands' youngest councillor is celebrating his second major success in four months after winning a place to study at Birmingham University.

Jake Cooper, a Dudley councillor, said he was 'ecstatic' after achieving an A*, A and B grades in his A-levels after taking exams at King Edwards College, in Stourbridge.

His success is even more impressive as he had to revise while he campaigning to win his Belle Vale ward council seat in May.

The 18-year-old is now looking forward to studying political science and international relations in the next step of a political career he hopes will see him in the House of Commons.

Tricky

As one of the youngest councillors in the country, he admitted balancing a political career and school work was tricky.

"My results were brilliant and much better than I expected," he said. "It was obviously very difficult and I was improvising quite a lot.

"I had to make sure I left another time between campaigning and revising and I stuck to my timetable, making sure I got my college work done and that I think is a good tip for anyone studying."

He said he chose the University of Birmingham because he wants to continue as a councillor while studying and trying to enjoy the student life.

"I'm looking forward to meeting new people and getting involved in the debates and exchanging of ideas," he added.

Hall art exhibition

HIMLEY Hall, near Dudley, is playing host to an exhibition of work by local artists.

The work of members of 90-year-old Dudley Society of Artists is being staged until September 2. There is free entry to the hall from 11am to 4pm each day.

Jean and Ann Bedworth after donating £2,500 to Russells Hall Hospital

Christine Taylor, left, and Jean in 2001

Jean at a celebration garden party to honour her British Empire Medal

Jean Hughes along with her keep fit class at Wordsley Community Centre

Jean Hughes pictured back in 1972

Jean Hughes, front, with members of her keep fit group in 1983

Jean exercises right to retire

FOR more than four decades she has been helping women across the Black Country keep fit – and has never missed a single class.

Now, 46 years after putting on her first session, 82-year-old Jean Hughes has decided to call it a day.

When she started out at Wordsley Community Centre in 1972 she had eight women taking part – and now she has said farewell to 90. Mother-of-one Jean said: "I've always wanted to keep fit. I was going to classes in 1957 in West Bromwich and when I came to live in Kingswinford I joined a class and that's when I was asked to take it over.

"When I took over in Wordsley, there were only eight women but now there's 90. The ladies became friends and it was a lovely friendly atmosphere. It was very difficult to walk out and think 'that's it, I've done it now'. My daughter visited that class for me, knowing that it would be difficult to walk out.

"I had some members with young daughters and then the daughters left to get married and have children of their own, quite a few mothers and daughters over the years."

Jean, from Kingswinford, has shown so much dedication to the fitness cause that she has never missed a class – even when it snowed.

She has also helped to raise £129,000 for charity and has been awarded a British Empire Medal.

"I think we've covered most charities," she said. "It was not just me, it was my group as well. I've got a good group of ladies.

"I had been nominated by members of the class and I said I would accept the medal on behalf of my class because I didn't do it alone."

"I've got about 80 retirement cards and letters from people that don't want me to retire, but after 46 years I feel I want a bit of time for me because it's taken up an awful lot of my time.

"It was a big decision. Now I'm going to wind down and do what I want to do."

Mandy still flying high after 40 years service

Mandy Fleet, aged 62, who has celebrated 40 years with the force, with Inspector Chris Cotton at the airport

ONE of West Midlands Police's most dedicated members of staff has celebrated 40 years with the force.

Film classic Grease was only just being released when Mandy Fleet joined the police.

The 62-year-old was one of the first-ever police staff members and is still working hard as part of the team based at Birmingham Airport.

The business support officer – a keen charity fundraiser who helped raise £90,000 for worthy causes in just four years – has no job departure plans anytime soon.

She found romance near the runway after meeting husband-to-be Andy when he was a security worker at the airport. The couple now have a 19-year-old daughter.

To mark her 40th anniversary milestone Mrs Fleet, from Solihull, was treated to gifts from her co-workers.

She said: "It is hard to believe it is 40 years since I started at Bournville Lane Police Station."

Councils to stick with weedkiller in US ruling

COUNCILS in the Black Country have said they will continue to use a weedkiller after an American court ruled it 'causes cancer.'

Sandwell and Dudley councils both say they will continue to use glyphosate despite fears it could be harmful, after a Californian man received £226 million damages from Monsanto who use it in their product, Round Up.

The company has denied it causes cancer and said it will appeal against the ruling. Both councils said they use the chemical in its parks and green spaces.

Councillor Bill Gavan, Sandwell Council's cabinet member for leisure, said: "We only use very small amounts of products containing glyphosate in our parks and green spaces. No guidance has been issued in the UK regarding any change in how they are used.

"Weedkillers are used strictly in line with the manufacturer's safety information and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) assessments. Staff who use these products are issued with

By Dayna Farrington

personal protective equipment and have received training on their safe use. We have no current plans to stop using them – we will of course comply with any guidance given by the Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency and DEFRA."

The council added the Risk Assessment Committee of the European Chemicals Agency concluded in March 2015 that there is no evidence to link glyphosate to cancer in humans, based on available information.

Dudley Council has said it also uses the product on highway verges and it relies on advice from government agencies when choosing chemicals.

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Figures show the areas with urgent need for new homes

NEW research has uncovered exactly which areas are in urgent need of new homes. Damning figures published by the BBC show Sandwell has the highest housing need across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Only half of the homes required by the Government are being built in the borough. It's a better story in Dudley and South Staffordshire, as both areas are meeting more than 100 per cent of their 10-year housing target.

Dudley Council oversaw the building of, on average, 628 homes every year across the last decade, while South Staffs saw 254.

And Wolverhampton and Walsall are achieving about 75 per cent each, with Wolverhampton organising building on average about 550 homes each year over the last 10 years and Walsall about 675.

Ambition

However, Sandwell was found to be barely meeting half of its target, scraping by with 51 per cent of the Government's aim. The figures showed the area had seen approximately 730 homes built each year during the last decade but it needed to be double that.

But Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling believed Sandwell was doing pretty well in terms of house building. He said: "In 2006 we set an ambition to get just under 21,500 homes built in Sandwell by 2026 – an aim which is set out in the Black Country Core Strategy.

"With almost a decade to go, and against the difficulties of the economic crash, good progress is being made. Sandwell has already seen more than 8,000 new homes built since then – the highest of any of the Black Country boroughs."

Iconic films to take off at outdoor event

FILM fans will get to see light sabre battles and high-octane flying with open-air screenings at an aviation museum.

RAF Museum Cosford's outdoor cinema event will return on September 21 and 22 with showings of Top Gun and Star Wars: The Force Awakens. This year's event will see a bigger 30ft inflatable screen built alongside the VC10 and Hercules aircraft, including digital projectors, and a new surround-sound system.

To celebrate the occasion, the museum will be transforming an aircraft into a popcorn and snacks bar where visitors will be able to step onboard to buy their movie snacks.

Abi Betteridge, the museum's public events manager, said: "Both movies are so iconic and fitting for us as a venue."

Tickets are available from £13 per person, or for £15 on the door.

Tribute on VJ Day in memory of sacrifices

Flags lowered at the 73rd anniversary of Victory over Japan Day.

THE courage and bravery shown in the Far East by British servicemen was remembered at a poignant service marking the 73rd anniversary of VJ Day.

A moment of reflection and tribute was held at the service in Wolverhampton's St Peter's Square next to the cenotaph.

Veterans, civic dignitaries and members of the public were among those who took part in the service of remembrance. Wolverhampton Mayor and Mayoress and representatives from the Royal British Legion, Wolverhampton United Ex Service Council and the Burma Star Association's Wolverhampton Branch gathered to pay their respects. Trumpets sounded and standards were hoisted up and lowered as a sign of respect to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

A prayer was held, followed by two minutes of silence, for people to reflect on the anniversary of Victory Over Japan Day.

A wreath was laid by Wolverhampton Mayor Phil Page, who had a relative who endured the conditions in Japan. "One of my relatives was a prisoner of Japan and he never spoke about it. We never knew about the trials and tribulations," he said.

. "It's a statement to those who served, suffered and died during the conflict in the Far East.

Wiggle with Donchez – oh yes we will!

BRITAIN'S Got Talent star Donchez Dacres will Wiggle and Wine his way to the ball as he stars in a charity pantomime later this year.

Wolverhampton-based Donchez will be joining the cast of Mary Stevens Hospice's annual pantomime at Stourbridge Town Hall in November.

After capturing the hearts of the nation, the 61-year-old AA worker will perform in the production of Cinderella.

Amanda Bowen, deputy head of fundraising at Mary Stevens Hospice, said: "Much like the rest of the nation, we were wiggling and wining from the moment he appeared on our screens and we could not be more thrilled that he's joined the cast for this show.

"Community is at the heart of everything we do here at the charity, and to be able to let our supporters know that a performer of his calibre will be on hand to entertain them in support of the families relying on our care is just such a special thing to be able to do."

Cinderella will run for five shows at the town hall, between November 28 and November 30. It is the second show organised by the Stourbridge-based hospice, after their production of the Wizard of Oz sold out all three performances in January.

Call 01384 377778 for tickets.

Hair salon cuts it with fundraiser

A NEW hair salon in Wolverhampton raised £266 for a charity close to the owner's heart.

Rubix Salon in Oxley, which opened in February, held an open evening in aid of Birmingham Children's Hospital. Owner Helen Turner's son spent his first three weeks at the hospital after being born prematurely.

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Park cycling club is under starter's orders

A NEW community cycling club based at Lightwoods Park in Bearwood is looking for budding cyclists and volunteers to run sessions.

Lightwoods Community Cycle Club aims to encourage and support local people to start cycling or to take it up again.

The club meets on Wednesdays, with a "get back into cycling" instructor-led ride to build confidence followed by a session for those who can't ride but want to learn.

Currently the sessions are for adults only but the aim is to develop the club so children's sessions can also take place in the near future.

The club has been formed by Sandwell Council, Cycling UK the national cycling charity, Healthy Sandwell, Benson Community Project, TfWM and staff at Lightwoods Park and House.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for leisure Councillor Bill Gavan said: "This is a great opportunity for people to either get back into cycling or learn for the first time.

"If you don't own a bike don't worry, we have some available to borrow. It's a good way of getting back in the saddle before committing to buying a bike."

The get back into cycling sessions are held on a Wednesday between 10am and 11.15am and the learn to ride sessions are also Wednesdays 11.30am until 12.45pm.

Booking is essential and bikes are available to borrow free of charge.

For more information, to volunteer to lead bike rides or to book a place, call Lightwoods House on 0121 569 4141 or email lightwoods_house@sandwell.gov.uk

Council leader Steve Eling with leisure chief Councillor Bill Gavan and riders

Camping out for shows

A SPECIAL show featuring three caravans and drawing on the stories of visits by Black Country folk to Skegness will be performed in Sandwell.

Life's A Beach is returning for a series of shows in the borough, following a successful run last year.

A performance took place yesterday, Wednesday, at Tipton Library and there are further ones at Thimblemill Library in Smethwick, tomorrow, Thursday and Lightwoods House & Park in Bearwood on Sunday, August 26. The show is a link-up between Black Country Touring and So Festival in Skegness.

Each of the three caravans is a specially created performance space to represent a different part of an experience shared across cultures at the British seaside.

The audience is split into three groups and moves from caravan to caravan, to see each of the performances.

Councillor Syeda Khatun, deputy leader of Sandwell Council, said: "This very entertaining show is making a welcome return to Sandwell and it is great that local people have the opportunity to enjoy seeing it."

For more information, visit www.bctouring.co.uk/whats-on.

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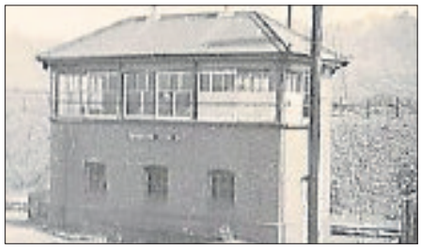
A southbound freight in the area of the current excavations

A northbound freight passing the trolley hut

AiM excavating next to the Smestow Valley Path

AiM revealing the edge of the foundation



Wombourne signal box

On track to unearth mystery foundations

OVER four weekends the local archaeology group Archaeology in Mind (AiM) are excavating intriguing foundations discovered at Tettenhall Station.

Fifty metres beyond the end of the platforms on what is now the Smestow Valley Path, a badger uncovered the corner of a concrete foundation, and the Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre called in the group to help reveal what they might be.

Without disturbing the badgers, AiM began and discovered the base of what is clearly quite a large building.

Photographic evidence shows that the Permanent Way gang

MEMORY LANE

Report by Alec Brew

who looked after the line, had several huts in the approximate area, including a large hut to house their trolleys, a large motorised trolley to carry sleepers and fencing and the like, and a smaller ganger's trolley.

Different

The gang also had their own hut in which to take breaks, and there were two or three smaller ones.

Historically it is believed that, although there was never a signal box at Tettenhall Station like at Wombourne Station, the foundations for one were laid. Will the excavations of AiM reveal that what the badgers discovered, was the foundations of a signal box or the ganger's huts, or something entirely different ?

The line through Tettenhall only operated from 1925-65, and there was a passenger service for only the first seven years. The branch, which would have taken the line to Bridgnorth, was never built, and the line became one of the first of the Beeching cuts.

Within the Heritage Centre there is a 00 Gauge layout of the station, and curator, Alec Brew, says: 'It would be nice to be able to make this corner of the layout exactly correct."

Dan Brew on his ganger's trolley in Wombourne Station

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Modfather set for date In the City

A year on from the 40th anniversary of The Jam's debut album, modfather Paul Weller is In the City – Birmingham that is – as he shows no signs of slowing down.

Weller, aged 60, released his 13th studio album A Kind of Revolution this year and announced a UK arena tour. He performs at The Genting Arena tomorrow (Friday) with support from Stone Foundation, whose latest album Street Rituals was produced by . . . Paul Weller.

The concert kicks off a month of big name acts to perform in the second city.

This weekend sees successful R&B vocal group Boyz II Men in action, famed for the big hit End of the Road. Catch them at the O2 Academy on Saturday, followed by Grammy-award winning Justin Timberlake at the Arena Birmingham on Bank Holiday Monday, August 27.

Fellow former Disney Club star Britney Spears – joined by Pitbull – performs her final UK arena tour date of her #1 Las Vegas residency show at the Genting Arena on August 31.

Here Comes the Summer Son as Scottish alternative rock band Texas, led by Sharleen Spiteri, perform at the Symphony Hall on September 1 alongside special guests Imelda May and Ward Thomas as part of The MJR Group's Skyline Series.

The iconic Barry Manilow performs on September 4 at Arena Birmingham and Passenger the following night at the O2 Institute.

Chart-topper Jason Derulo has a date at Arena Birmingham on September 26.

MADE stars Chase & Status and Rage MC

Female rapper Stefflon Don

MADE for hip-hop

Chase & Status, Giggs, Andy C, Stefflon Don and more take centre stage at MADE For The Weekend in Birmingham.

Following the successful move to Perry Park and a sold-out MADE Festival, the two-day indoor event, on October 12 and 13, will see a massive line-up of hip hop, grime and bass all under one roof at the Genting Arena.

Other confirmed acts include Gorgon City, Pusha T, Maleek Berry, Preditah, Nasty C, My Nu Leng, Dread MC and SaSaSaS.

Procedings kick off on October 12 with rapper Pusha T, president of Kanye West's GOOD Music label, who recently releassed new album Daytona. Grime artist Gigg, female star Stefflon Don and homegrown Birmingham talent, the DJ and producer Preditah also take the stage, along with the British-Nigerian act Maleek Berry.

Chase & Status, best remembered for their 2009 top 10 hit End Credits, are among the illustrious line-up for the Saturday, alongside Andy C, who recently sold out Wembley Arena in three days.

Gorgon City bring their bass-infused Kingdom brand to the Genting Arena in a special extended DJ set. Bristol duo My Nu Leng featuring Dread MC also join the line-up, while SaSaSaS appear hot on the heels of a stellar performance at MADE Festival 2018.

There will be a back set from Bushbaby and Sammy Virji and Resonance Records head honcho Max Chapman will fly the flag for UK talent. House producer Eli Brown completes the existing set. More top names are likely to be announced.

MADE Festival director Pete Jordan said: "After the fifth year of MADE Festival summer edition and a 12,000 sell-out at Perry Park in July, we felt it was time to take the brand to the next level.

"We wanted to bring the extravaganza of the festival into an indoor setting, and in autumn when the UK festival season is well and truly over."

Oh, What A Night ahead at theatre

Theatregoers can enjoy the sounds of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons as the hit musical The Jersey Boys returns to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre.

It tells the true life story of four boys from the wrong side of the tracks who wrote their own songs, invented a unique sound, and sold 175 million records worldwide.

It will feature hit after legendary hit including Beggin', Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Oh, What A Night!, Sherry, Walk Like a Man, Rag Doll, Bye Bye Baby and Big Girls Don't Cry.

The show runs at the Lichfield Street venue from August 28 to September 8 at 7.30pm each night plus 2.30pm matinees on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Meanwhile, Move It, Move It to the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham to join Alex the lion, Marty the zebra, Melman the giraffe, Gloria the hippo and those plotting penguins as they bound onto the stage in the Madagascar the Musical.

Based on the smash-hit animated movie, it follows the group of friends as they escape from their home in New York's Central Park Zoo and find themselves on an unexpected journey to the madcap world of King Julien's Madagascar.

It runs until September 4 and arrives in Wolverhampton next May.

Matilda runs until September 8 at the Birmingham Hippodrome, while a smash-and-grab production – The Comedy About A Bank Robbery – runs at the city's Rep until September 8. It would be criminal to miss it!

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Food offerings include burgers, hotdogs, Thai, Italian and Indian. You'll also be able to enjoy a tipple (or two) including a Prosecco bar, beer and gin!

Musician George Ezra

If it feels like Paradise you know it's George heading your way

Singer-songwriter George Ezra will be riding Shotgun into Birmingham's Genting Arena next year.

Fans of the Hertfordshire-born 25-year-old will be in Paradise as he performs on March 17 as part of a 10-date series of performances.

The announcement comes after Ezra, who topped the charts with Shotgun this summer – his first number one – headlined Boardmasters Festival in Newquay, and ahead of a sold-out UK tour that begins in November.

Ezra followed up his debut album Wanted On Voyage – the third best-selling album of the year in the UK in 2014 – with this year's offering Staying At Tamara's, which is officially the biggest-selling album so far this year. It remains in the top five of the Official Albums Chart 20 weeks after release. This year Ezra appeared the Forest Live concerts on Cannock Chase, one of three headline acts alongside Paul Heaton & Jacqui Abbott and Paloma Faith.

Ezra first rose to prominence four years ago with the release of the hit single Budapest.

He is best known for other hit singles such as Blame it on Me, Listen to the Man, Barcelona, Cassie O and Don't Matter Now.

No ordinary Joe! Comic marks 30th anniversary

Joe Pasquale burst on to our television screens 30 years ago on ITV's New Faces – and doesn't seem to have been away ever since.

A winner of I'm a Celebrity . . . Get Me Out of Here, the squeaky-voiced comic is on his 30th anniversary tour A Few Of His Favourite Things; billed as 'a celebration of his best cack, plus some surprises on the way'.

A regular in recent years at the Grand Theatre's pantomime, he returns to the Lichfield Street venue on September 12, from 6.30pm, with tickets starting at £14.

The legendary comedian Kevin Hart has been pretty busy since the last time he ended up in Birmigham with his sell-out 'What Now' tour. His memoir I Can't Make This Up: Life Lessons debuted at Number One on the New York Times Bestseller list, he voiced Captain Underpants in its first movie and appeared in the Jumanji reboot starring Jack Black and Dwayne Johnson.

He is back in the Midlands at Arena Birmingham on August 30, from 7pm, on 'The Kevin Hart Irresponsible Tour'.

The voice of Love Island, comedian Iain Stirling is also in Birmingham, appearing at the Rep on September 7, exploring dinner party etiquette, feminism and the pressures on a generation brought up in a world of instant gratification, while George Egg brings his DIY Chef show to the Old Rep on September 8 from 7.30pm.

Joe Pasquale

Mysterious play Meek to take centre stage

Penelope Skinner's mysterious new play, Meek, is being staged at Birmingham Repertory Theatre from September 4-8, following its première at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this month.

Described as a haunting vision of ruthless state control, tense friendships and one woman's determination not to be broken, Meek is a tale which reflects on fraught times.

In a society where private lives become political and freedom of expression is not an option, Irene finds herself imprisoned but as tales of her incarceration spread she is forced to make a brutal decision.

Award-winning writer Skinner is recognised as one of the UK's leading voices in contemporary theatre. She says: "On a small scale, it is a story about friendship, faith, shame and betrayal. On a wider scale, it is about the ways in which spirituality can be co-opted for political gain, and the impact of that on our personal freedoms. It is also a play about love."

Directed by Amy Hodge, the cast includes Scarlett Brookes, Shvorne Marks and Amanda Wright.

Live bands after racing an odds-on winner

Ocean Colour Scene and Kaiser Chiefs will entertain punters at the end of a day's racing at Wolverhampton. The Dunstall Park course is putting on two nights of post-racing music, with Birmingham-based Ocean Colour Scene kicking proceedings on August 31. The band have produced five top 10 albums, including Moseley Shoals and the number one Marchin' Already in 1997. Top 40 hits include The Circle, The Day We Caught the Train and Riverboat Song.

They take to the stage after a seven-race card from 7.30pm.

The Brit award-winning Kaiser Chiefs, led by Ricky Wilson, follow the next night, which doubles as Ladies Day at the racetrack. The Leeds band's six studio albums, including the Ivor Novello and NME award-winning Employment have spawned a string of hits, among them I Predict A Riot, Oh My God, Never Miss A Beat and the number one Ruby.

After the jockeys have weighed in for the final time on the card at 5.10pm, Kaiser Chiefs take the stage at 6.10pm.

SATURDAY'S TV AUGUST 25

CHOICE

Katie Derham

Proms Extra (BBC2, 6.50pm)
The programme moves into the Royal Albert Hall for one night as an expectant audience gathers to hear Bernstein's On the Town. Katie Derham and guests discuss Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies and a world premiere by singer-songwriter Laura Mvula. David Owen Norris offers another Chord of the Week and there is a performance by Chineke!

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's Family Favourites. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League. Catalans Dragons v Warrington Wolves (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.30 Film:** Shrek Forever After. (2010)

6.55 BBC News.

7.05 Regional Programme.

7.15 Impossible Celebrities. Dick and Dom are among the 18 celebrities playing for charity in the quiz. Rick Edwards hosts.

8.05 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman challenge more famous faces to take part in the unorthodox quiz show. This time, all the contestants are veterans of various TV talent shows or reality contests. MasterChef 2015 winner Simon Wood teams up with his 2016 successor Jane Devonshire, while Lee McQueen, who won the fourth series of The Apprentice, joins forces with Yasmina Siadatan, the ambitious businesswoman who followed him in 2009. Plus, X Factor 2013 champion Sam Bailey throws her lot in with Pop Idol series two star Michelle McManus, and Britain's Got Talent-winning street dancer George Sampson bands together with singer and one-time Celebrity Big Brother star Jermaine Jackson. (R)

8.50 Casualty. Wanting to keep busy, Alicia arrives back at work in the ED earlier than expected, and Connie gives her the job of medical lead for the day. OAPs Joseph and Reggie decide to sneak out of their care home and make their way to a diner looking forward to a full English breakfast, but just as they arrive, Reggie collapses and an ambulance is called. Louise is ready to give Dylan a piece of her mind about bringing on a CQC investigation, until she learns that he is going to clean out Sam's locker later on.

9.40 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes turns to the internet to find a date for Valentine's Day. (R)

10.10 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Match of the Day.

11.50 Film: Reasonable Doubt. (2014)

1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.40 Top Class. (R) **7.10** Marrying Mum and Dad. (R) **7.40** Officially Amazing Goes Bunkers. (R) **8.10** The Dengineers. (R) **8.35** Deadly Dinosaurs with Steve Backshall. (R) **9.05** David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R) **9.30** Nature's Miracle Babies. (R) **10.30** Killer Whales: Beneath the Surface – Natural World. (R) **11.15** Rugby League's Legendary Watersplash Final. (R) **12.00** Nigel Slater: Eating Together. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** Great British Menu. (R) **1.30** Garden Rescue. (R) **2.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Scrappers. (R) **3.30** Saving Lives at Sea. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Flog It! (R) **5.50** A Passage to Britain. (R)

6.50 Proms Extra. The programme moves into the Royal Albert Hall for one night as an expectant audience gathers to hear Bernstein's On the Town. Presented by Katie Derham.

7.30 Dad's Army. The platoon plans to re-enact the battle between St George and the dragon as part of the Wings for Victory fundraising effort – unaware the ARP wardens have the same idea. (R)

8.00 Blitz: The Bombs That Changed Britain. The deadly impact of an incendiary bomb that set fire to St Peter's Church in the historic heart of Bristol on the night of Sunday November 24, 1940. Last in the series. (R)

9.00 QI XL. Sandi Toksvig invites Jason Manford, Sara Pascoe, Jeremy Clarkson and Alan Davies to answer questions on the subject of 'noble rot' in an extended edition of the panel show. (R)

9.50 Anita & Me – and Me. Meera Syal journeys back to Essington in the Black Country, the mining village where she grew up, describing how her childhood inspired her coming-of-age novel Anita and Me. The film Anita & Me follows.

9.55 Film: Anita & Me. (2002) Two girls from different ethnic backgrounds strike up an unlikely friendship during the 1970s. Comedy drama based on Meera Syal's novel, starring Chandeep Uppal and Anna Brewster.

11.25 Film: Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara. (2011) A groom-to-be takes his two friends on a road trip to Spain, participating in extreme sports along the way. Comedy, starring Abhay Deol, Hrithik Roshan and Farhan Akhtar.

1.50 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Om Nom Stories. **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Decoded. (R) **7.15** NinjaGo: Decoded. (R) **7.30** ToonMarty. (R) **7.40** ToonMarty. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Saturday. **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning. (R) **11.20** James Martin's American Adventure. (R) **11.50** £10k Holiday Home. (R) **12.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **1.20** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** ITV Racing Live: York Ebor Festival. The fourth and final day of the festival. **4.00** The Chase. (R) **5.00** WOS Wrestling.

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.30 Japandemonium. A final helping of the strangest Japanese TV, showcasing some of the maddest and funniest moments ever broadcast. This edition features the game of Candy or not Candy – where contestants bite objects to find out – chopsticks bungee jumping, and extreme pans being dropped on the head. Narrated by Melvin Odoom. Last in the series.

7.00 Big Star's Little Star. Stephen Mulhern hosts the entertainment show in which children spill the beans about famous relatives James Cracknell, Karen Blick and Vernie Bennett, talking about their home lives, making heart-warming revelations or telling downright embarrassing stories. The contestants are all hoping to win as much money as possible for their chosen charities.

8.00 Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King. (2003) As hobbits Frodo and Sam near the end of their journey into the dark lands of Mordor to destroy the One Ring, the evil Sauron unleashes the full might of his armies on Middle-earth. Meanwhile, Aragorn must fulfil his destiny of becoming king by leading his people into a climactic battle with the forces of darkness. Conclusion of the fantasy adventure trilogy, starring Elijah Wood, Viggo Mortensen, Ian McKellen and Sean Astin.

11.45 ITV News; Weather.

12.05 WOS Wrestling. (R) **1.00** Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Eternal Glory. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Triathlon: Long Course Weekend. **7.10** Mobil 1: The Grid. **7.35** Frasier. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Simpsons. (R) **10.25** The Simpsons. (R) **10.55** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. Coverage of the third practice session at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. **12.25** F1 Meets Nigel Mansell. (R) **12.55** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Qualifying Live. Coverage of the qualifying session at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps (Start-time 2.00pm). **3.45** Car SOS. (R) **4.45** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **5.15** The People's Vet.

6.10 Escape to the Chateau: DIY. As Jonathan and Michael prepare their chateau for the big wedding, they have a sewage problem that threatens to take the whole first floor out of action. (R)

7.05 Channel 4 News.

7.35 Film: Captain America: The First Avenger. (2011) A puny but brave volunteer is rejected for military service during the Second World War. He becomes the test subject for an experiment that transforms him into the ultimate soldier, and battles against a secret Nazi society plotting to harness the powers of a mystical artefact. Superhero adventure, with Chris Evans, Hugo Weaving, Hayley Atwell and Tommy Lee Jones.

10.00 Film: Pain & Gain. (2013) Premiere. Three bodybuilders make a disastrous attempt to kidnap a businessman and get him to sign over his fortune. Fact-based action comedy, with Mark Wahlberg and Dwayne Johnson.

12.30 Film: Regression. (2015) A detective finds evidence of a satanic cult when investigating a case in which a man admits to sexually abusing his teenage daughter. Thriller, starring Ethan Hawke. **2.20** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Simone arrives at Price Slice to find it has been broken into, Darren and Mandy's affair continues as they end up kissing, and Dennis and Liberty decide Milo should leave. (R) **4.30** Village of the Year with Penelope Keith. On the Devon coast, Penelope learns about Beer's historic fishing fleet, while Alex Langlands goes native in the Welsh village of Llanllyfni. (R) **5.25** The Posh Frock Shop. A former prima ballerina seeks a dress for a VIP event. (R) **5.50** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. Kirstie Allsopp creates a kitchen-diner makeover. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Access. **10.40** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 4. (R) **11.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.10** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **3.10** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.10** Rich House, Poor House. (R) **5.10** 5 News Weekend. **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R)

6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! In South East London, officers Gary and Cona chase a debt of nearly £50,000 in unpaid rent, leading to a feisty confrontation with the debtor. Elsewhere, agents Gary and Paul try to recover over £2,000 owed by a teenager to a local garage in Kent, and officers Max and Paul head to South West London on the trail of a film producer who owes £8,000 to financial advisers. (R)

7.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Mike Allonby and Terry Jones repossess debtors' cars in Cheshire and Liverpool, while Paul Bohill and Steve Pinner evict a couple with young children a few days before Christmas. (R)

8.00 Before They Were Stars. A trek back through the TV archive to uncover embarrassing early brushes with fame endured by some of today's biggest stars. Among those skewered are pop stars, rock legends, silver-screen icons, celebrated comedians and sporting heroes.

9.00 Gino's Win Your Wish List. Gino D'Acampo hosts the game show in which a family of five contestants choose their dream prizes, then in pairs answer questions to try to bank the items on their wish list. In the final round, two players try to secure all the prizes they have won so far – as well as a family holiday.

10.00 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the housemates' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they try to get used to living alongside one another.

11.05 Best of Bad TV: Live & Dangerous. A collection of the biggest TV howlers caught on film, including a fire on the Blue Peter set, famous folk who think they can sing, wardrobe malfunctions and disastrous award shows. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** The Last Hours of Jimi Hendrix. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Elsa the Lioness **7.30** BBC Proms 2018 **9.50** West Side Stories – The Making of a Classic **10.50** Leonard Bernstein at the BBC **11.50** Top of the Pops: 1986 **12.20** Heavy Metal Britannia **1.50** Goth at the BBC **2.50** West Side Stories – The Making of a Classic **3.50** Close

ITV2

12.00 Catchphrase **12.40** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.40 Film:** The Flintstones (1994) **2.50** FYI Daily **2.55 Film:** The Flintstones (1994) **3.30 Film:** Spy Kids (2001) **4.30** FYI Daily **4.35 Film:** Spy Kids (2001) **5.25 Film:** Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back (1980) **6.25** FYI Daily **6.30 Film:** Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back (1980) **8.00 Film:** The Mask (1994) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** The Mask (1994) **10.05** Family Guy **11.05** American Dad! **11.55** The Cleveland Show **12.55 Film:** Hercules (2014) **1.55** FYI Daily **2.00 Film:** Hercules (2014) **2.45** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

3.05 Film: Carry On Cruising (1962) **4.55** A Touch of Frost **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Endeavour **11.00** Vera **1.00** On the Buses **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

2.05 Storage Wars **3.05 Film:** Cahill, US Marshal (1973) **4.05** FYI Daily **4.10 Film:** Cahill, US Marshal (1973) **5.10 Film:** The Sting (1973) **6.10** FYI Daily **6.15 Film:** The Sting (1973) **7.45 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **8.45** FYI Daily **8.50 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **10.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **11.00 Film:** Jaws (1975) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** Jaws (1975) **1.30** Better Late Than Never **2.30** World Cup Rivalries: Brazil v Italy **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **12.00 Film:** Volcano (1997) **2.05** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.15** The Big Bang Theory **6.45 Film:** Super 8 (2011) **9.00 Film:** Prometheus (2012) **11.25** Gogglebox **1.35** Tattoo Fixers **2.40** Rude Tube: Love Bytes **3.35** Gogglebox **4.25** Rude(ish) Tube **5.10** How I Met Your Mother

Film4

11.00 Carry On Cabby (1963) **12.50** Robots (2005) **2.30** Night at the Museum (2006) **4.45** Cheaper By the Dozen 2 (2005) **6.40** About Time (2013) **9.00** Sicario (2015) **11.20** Bone Tomahawk (2015) **1.55** The Man with the Iron Fists (2012) **3.50** Close

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SUNDAY'S TV AUGUST 26

CHOICE

Keeley Hawes

Bodyguard (BBC1, 9pm)
New series. A specialist protection officer is assigned to guard an ambitious home secretary who may be the target of a terror plot following her support of a controversial new surveillance bill. The bodyguard's experiences in the army have left him harbouring deep-seated resentments - which may make him a threat to the politician he is supposed to protect. Thriller, with Richard Madden, Keeley Hawes, Sophie Rundle, Pippa Haywood, Paul Ready, Nicholas Gleaves, Tom Brooke and Vincent Franklin.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** Match of the Day. (R) **10.25** Sunday Morning Live. **11.25** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Still Open All Hours. (R) **1.45** Hold the Sunset. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.30** Songs of Praise. **4.05** Fake or Fortune? (R) **5.05** Eat Well for Less? (R)

6.05 The Deer Stalker: Our Lives. Documentary following a man who stalks red deer in the hills near Fort William as he passes on his skills to his 15-year-old son during one of Scotland's worst winters.

6.35 BBC News.

6.50 Regional Programme.

7.00 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Margherita Taylor present the show from North Wales, discovering how miniature antennas attached to bees have revealed new information about the insects' lives. Plus, Margherita joins dementia patients and their carers in a trip on the Blaenau Ffestiniog railway, Adam Henson investigates new developments in cattle farming, and John Craven is joined by judges Cerys Matthews and Simon King to announce the final 12 in this year's photographic competition.

8.00 Fake or Fortune? Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould investigate a small watercolour sketch found in a hoard of artwork stolen by the Nazis, that could be the work of sculptor Henry Moore.

9.00 Bodyguard. New series. A specialist protection officer is assigned to guard an ambitious home secretary who may be the target of a terror plot. Thriller, with Keeley Hawes and Richard Madden.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, introducing highlights of Watford v Crystal Palace and Newcastle United v Chelsea.

11.30 Supermarket Shopping Secrets. A look at how the retailers compete in the market for healthier foods. (R)

12.30 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.35 BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **7.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.30** Countryfile Live. (R) **9.30** The Beechgrove Garden. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Great British Menu. (R) **12.00** Great British Menu. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **1.45** Triathlon World Series: Montreal Women's Race. **3.15** Wastemen. (R) **4.10** Saving Lives at Sea. (R) **5.10** Tribes, Predators & Me. (R)

6.10 Film: Raiders of the Lost Ark. (1981) Intrepid archaeologist Indiana Jones goes in search of the legendary Ark of the Covenant, a biblical artefact of devastating power. His quest leads him to Egypt, where the Nazis are plotting to use the Ark to further Hitler's plans for world domination – aided by Jones's deceitful French rival. Steven Spielberg's action adventure, with Harrison Ford, Karen Allen, Paul Freeman and John Rhys-Davies.

8.00 Dragons' Den. The panel of entrepreneurs assess the profit-making potential of a range of fishing bait, a pasta home delivery service, and a scheme to make money out of rubbish. With Evan Davis.

9.00 Eight Go Rallying: The Road to Saigon. The teams head for the Cambodian border, despite serious problems with two of the cars, and head for Angkor Wat, the mysterious centrepiece of the ancient Khmer empire.

10.00 Romesh Ranganathan: Irrational Live. The comedian's first-ever live stand-up show, in which the Bafta-nominated star takes shots at everyone from his children to a stranger in a coffee shop. (R)

11.00 Man Like Mobeen. Eight learns that his father is dying. When Mobeen agrees to visit him one last time, he is unprepared for the terrible secret he learns and the favour the old man has to ask. (R)

11.20 Man Like Mobeen. An anti-Islam march comes through the neighbourhood, and Mobeen ends up sharing a police van with the leader when he takes the blame for Aks' counter-protest. Last in the series. (R)

11.45 Pump Up the Bhangra: The Sound of Asian Britain. (R)

12.45 Sign Zone: Countryfile Live. (R)
1.40 Holby City. (R) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Om Nom Stories. **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Decoded. (R) **7.15** NinjaGo: Decoded. (R) **7.30** ToonMarty. (R) **7.40** ToonMarty. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Sunday. **9.25** Japandemonium. (R) **9.55** Cannonball. (R) **10.55** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **12.00** WOS Wrestling. (R) **1.00** ITV News; Weather. **1.15** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **2.15** Catchphrase. (R) **3.00** Tenable. (R) **4.00** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R)

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.30 Paul O'Grady's Little Heroes. Paul meets 11-year-old Fazeel, who was born with a genetic condition that causes his skin to blister at the slightest touch. Elsewhere, Paul also meets 10-year-old Aleksandra, as she undergoes pioneering craniofacial surgery to repair her cheekbone that has been damaged by cancer, and four-year-old Taheem, who needs a kidney transplant. (R)

7.00 The Chase: The Bloopers. Bradley Walsh presents a compilation of outtakes and laughs from the quiz show, featuring regular chasers the Governess, the Beast, the Vixen, the Sinnerman and the Dark Destroyer. (R)

8.00 Film: Jurassic World. (2015) Decades on from its first creation, Jurassic Park is now a fully operational attraction filled with genetically engineered dinosaurs. In need of a new attraction, the company behind the park creates an entirely new species – but it quickly escapes to terrorise the tourists. Action adventure sequel, starring Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard.

10.20 ITV News; Weather.

10.35 Larry Grayson: Shut That Door! Documentary exploring the entertainer's rise from poverty to fame, drawing on extracts from an unfinished autobiography that has only recently been discovered. (R)

12.20 Jackpot247. Interactive gaming.
3.00 Motorsport UK. Highlights from Snetterton. (R) **3.50** British Superbike Championship Highlights. Greg Haines presents action from round eight at Cadwell Park. (R) **4.40** ITV Nightscreen.
5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. Guests air their differences. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **6.10** Motorsport: Volkswagen Racing Cup32. **6.35** Motorsport: British Rally Championship. **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Para Swimming: European Championships. **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Peng Life. (R) **1.00** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live Build Up. Steve Jones presents a preview of the 13th round of the season. **1.40** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live. Coverage of the 13th round of the season (Start-time 2.00pm). **4.30** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live Reaction. Reaction to the 13th round of the season. **5.35** Car SOS. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Flying Across Britain with Arthur Williams. Arthur's final journey takes him across the east coast, visiting a series of airfields that played a vital role in the Second World War. He gets a look at the US Air Force's F15 fighter, visits the world's oldest and grandest air academy and gets the chance to take a flight with the only aerobatic team in existence that is licensed to take passengers. Last in the series.

8.00 Hidden Britain by Drone. Tony Robinson sends camera drones to shoot more aerial footage of areas of Britain that are off limits to the public, including a nuclear decommissioning site that is still in active use and has appropriately tight security. Plus, cameras catch footage of bats up close and reveal the truth behind crop circles. Last in the series.

9.00 Film: World War Z. (2013) Premiere. A virus sweeps across the globe, turning everyone infected into mindless, ravening zombies. As entire countries fall into chaos, a United Nations investigator sets off on a journey around the world to discover the cause of the pandemic and hopefully find a cure before human civilisation is brought to an end. Thriller based on the novel by Max Brooks, starring Brad Pitt.

11.15 Film: 47 Ronin. (2013) A former slave leads a band of samurai as they battle monstrous and magical enemies in a quest for redemption. Fantasy adventure, with Keanu Reeves and Hiroyuki Sanada.

1.30 The Crystal Maze. (R) **2.25** Mobil 1: The Grid. (R) **2.50** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R) **3.45** French Collection. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.40** Seaside Antics. (R) **6.45** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **7.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends: Thrills and Spills. (R) **7.30** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.45** Rusty Rivets. **8.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.15** Pirata & Capitano. **8.30** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Floogals. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **10.55** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.40** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.40 Film:** The Prince of Egypt. (1998) Animated Biblical musical, with the voice of Val Kilmer. **2.40** Access. **2.45 Film:** The Prince of Egypt. (1998) Concluded. **3.50 Film:** Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End. (2007) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp. **4.50** 5 News Update. **4.55 Film:** Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End. (2007) Concluded.

7.00 Worst Celebrity Pop Songs Ever. A countdown of the 40 most memorable musical efforts by celebrities who have decided to diversify into music. The programme features performances by Mr T, Katie Price, Vinnie Jones, Sam Fox, Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards, David Hasselhoff, an assortment of soap stars and Christopher Lee, who embarked on a second career as a heavy-metal singer in his '80s. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. The ups and downs of life in the BB house as friendships and alliances are made, battle lines are drawn and arguments erupt.

10.00 Film: The Bodyguard. (1992) A former secret service agent acts as a bodyguard for a famous singer who is being persecuted by an obsessed fan. Romantic thriller, starring Kevin Costner and Whitney Houston.

11.00 Access.

11.05 Film: The Bodyguard. (1992) Concluded.

12.35 Film: Whitney Houston: A Tragic Love. (2015) **2.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Frozen: Cryonics. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Simon Rattle: The Making of a Maestro **8.00** BBC Proms 2018 **10.00** Arena **11.00** Chuck Berry in Concert **12.00** Sings Stevie Wonder **1.00** Sex, Chips and Poetry: 50 Years of The Mersey Sound **2.00** The Secret Life of Landfill: A Rubbish History **3.30** Close

ITV2
12.35 Ninja Warrior UK **1.35** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.40 Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **3.40** FYI Daily **3.45 Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **4.45 Film:** Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of the Jedi (1983) **5.50** FYI Daily **5.55 Film:** Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of the Jedi (1983) **7.30 Film:** Rock of Ages (2012) **10.00** Family Guy **11.25** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **12.50** Ghosted **1.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records: Bonkingly Big Hits **2.10** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
5.00 Lewis **7.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Wire in the Blood **12.35** Princess Diana: A Life After Death **1.35** A Touch of Frost **3.20** Road to Avonlea **5.05** Judge Judy **5.25** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.00 Live British Touring Car Championship. Round eight. **6.15** Barcelona's European Glory **6.30** Pawn Stars **7.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **8.00** River Monsters **9.00 Film:** The Specialist (1994) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** The Specialist (1994) **11.15 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **1.30** Minder **2.30** Football's Greatest: Johan Cruyff **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.15 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **12.30** The Goldbergs **2.00** Young Sheldon **3.00** The Big Bang Theory **6.35 Film:** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) **9.00** Krypton **10.00** Fear the Walking Dead **11.00** Gogglebox **12.10** The Big Bang Theory **1.05** Krypton **2.05** Fear the Walking Dead **3.00** Rude Tube **3.25** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Shark Tale (2004) **12.55** Small Soldiers (1998) **3.15** Johnny English (2003) **5.10** Titanic (1997) **9.00** Fantastic Four (2015) Four scientists return from another dimension granted unusual powers, which they use to defend the Earth. Superhero adventure, starring Miles Teller. **10.55** Iron Man 2 (2010) **1.20** Yakuza Apocalypse (2015) **3.40** Close

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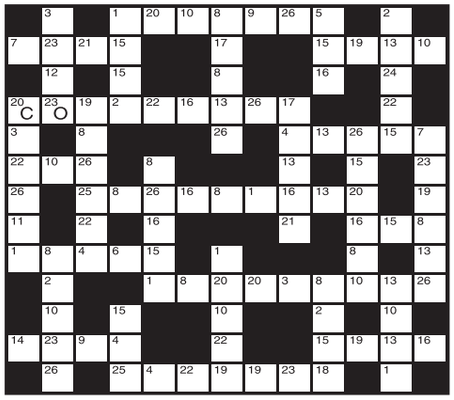
No.494

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



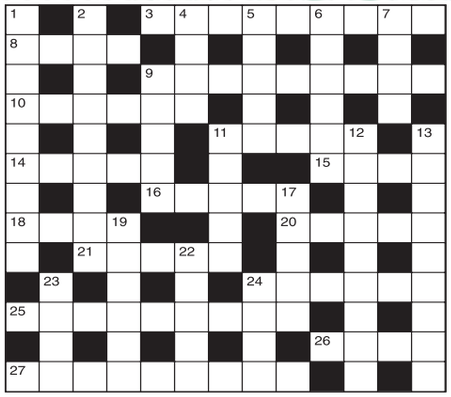
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20 C
8	21
9	22
10	23 O
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
U	P	K	M	E	X	R	D	C	O	Z	J	H
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
W	Y	F	A	N	G	L	B	I	T	V	S	Q

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues – both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

3. Medical containers houses (4-5)
8. Kind of stone for citrus fruit (4)
9. They make rings round ships' equipment (9)
10. There's no part for the benefactor (6)
11. See 23 Down
14. Dress up for a start to the day, we hear (5)
15. Collapse – minor operation after the doctor is seen (4)
16. Negotiate for something that gives particular pleasure (5)
18. Bird put in the crate alone (4)
20. Eastern potentate elected repeatedly (5)
21 & 12Dn. Moralists at the neighbouring hostelry? (5,9)
24. Shrubby plant needed before the Spanish produce a quantity of grain (6)
25. Warships to check credentials in escort arrangement (9)
26. See 24 Down
27. An assortment of roofs here on the edge of the sea (9)

Down

1. Help set an arrangement for trumpeters (9)
2. Mix me a lotion likely to excite sensitivity (9)
4. Club used for evening out (4)
5. Part of a flap elongated on a coat (5)
6. Used to being deposed? (6)
7. Late afternoon function unfinished (4)
9. Nobleman to be of some importance (5)
11. Missile associated with the sea (5)
12. See 21 Across
13. Weak, lacking prickles (9)
17. A gust will disturb the river (5)
19. Art Gallery window (6)
22. Wait cheerfully to find a letter within (5)
23 & 11Ac. What to do after retiring (2,2,5)
24 & 26Ac. Carry weapons with sleeves rolled up, one hears (4,4)

Quick Clues:

Across

3. Extempore (9)
8. Pool (4)
9. Begin (9)
10. Excuse (6)
11. Guide (5)
14. Young eel (5)
15. Daybreak (4)
16. Distant (5)
18. Afresh (4)
20. Arouse (5)
21. Ire (5)
24. Conquered (6)
25. Competitor (9)
26. Grass (4)
27. Dining-room (9)

Down

1. Transient (9)
2. Consultation (9)
4. Market (4)
5. Correct (5)
6. Heeded (6)
7. Carry (4)
9. Musical drama (5)
11. Laziness (5)
12. Storyteller (9)
13. Compensate (9)
17. Less (5)
19. Squirm (6)
22. Dogma (5)
23. Prod (4)
24. Endure (4)

Sudoku

	9		2			3		7
		8		3				6
6		7	5			8		
7				9		6		
	1		3		2		7	4
9		4		7				5
		2			9	5		8
5				2		4		
		9			4		2	

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	3	8	1	6	9	4	5	2
2	4	5	8	3	7	6	1	9
1	6	9	2	5	4	8	7	3
8	2	1	7	4	5	3	9	6
4	5	3	9	1	6	2	8	7
9	7	6	3	8	2	1	4	5
5	1	7	4	2	3	9	6	8
3	9	4	6	7	8	5	2	1
6	8	2	5	9	1	7	3	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Hymn; 3 Sergeant; 8 Gala; 9 Priority; 11 Air sea rescue; 13 Amazon; 14 Arrays; 17 Fit as a fiddle; 20 Ungainly; 21 Unit; 22 Detonate; 23 Hand.
Down: 1 Hogmanay; 2 Malaria; 4 Errors; 5 Goods-train; 6 Adieu; 7 Toys; 10 Decoration; 12 Asserted; 15 Addenda; 16 Tablet; 18 Ingot; 19 Quid. QUICK - Across: 1 So-so; 3 Manifest; 8 Role; 9 Converse; 11 Idiosyncrasy; 13 Hermit; 14 Danger; 17 Faithfulness; 20 Pedantic; 21 Stun; 22 Depleted; 23 Type. Down: 1 Straight; 2 Soldier; 4 Amount; 5 Invariable; 6 Earns; 7 Tier; 10 Assistance; 12 Presence; 15 Greatly; 16 Office; 18 Add up; 19 Sped.

Quiz

1. Whose novel Madame Bovary was published in 1857?
2. Which anaesthetic was discovered by Justus, Baron Von Liebig?
3. In which country was the Great Trek of 1836-37 made?
4. Of what is the Ivy League an eight-member group?
5. Which shrub has common and hedge varieties?
6. What do we call the mammal Oryctolagus cuniculus?
7. Which composer's most famous piece is Carnival of the Animals?
8. Who made up the Marx Brothers cinematic comedy team along with Groucho, Chico and Zeppo?
9. Of which tree is the ironbark a species?
10. Which best-selling British author and naturalist died in January 1995?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Val Kilmer; 2 The Balkan Peninsula; 3 Jeremy Bentham; 4 Vulture; 5 The Stars and Stripes; 6 French; 7 Gases; 8 Odin; 9 Harpers and Queen; 10 Selhurst Park.

Niner: MANSFIELD

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

6452 gives a South American animal,
28352356 gives a Latin American animal,
9762115 gives an African animal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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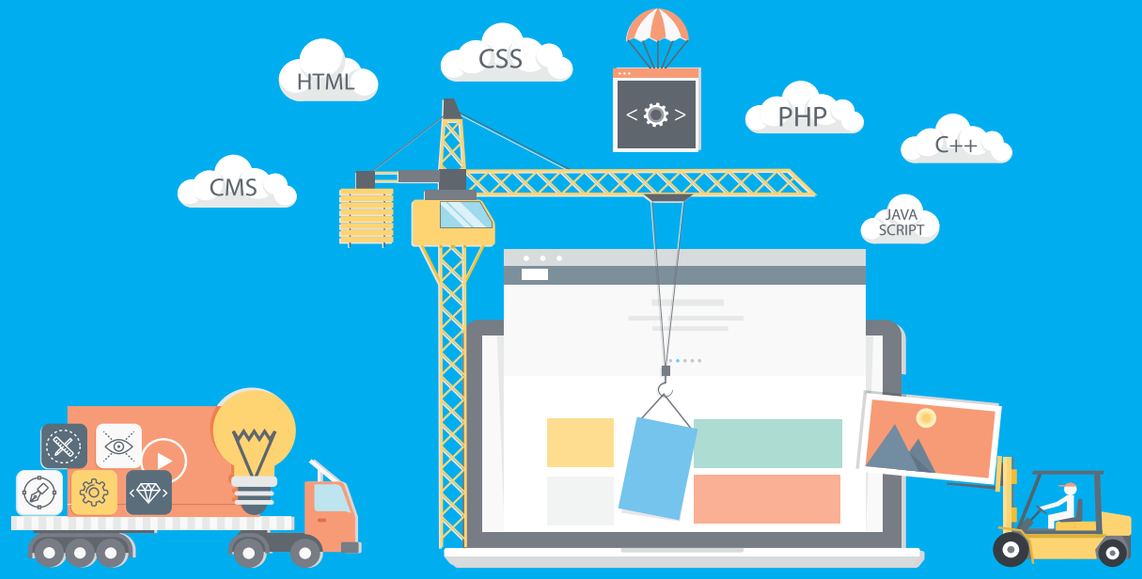

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Well-presented terraced home is new to the market

Having recently joined the property market, this recently refurbished, traditional terraced property, 9 Margam Crescent, Mossley, is for sale through Goodchilds Estate Agents at £130,000 with no chain.

It would be an ideal purchse for first-time buyers while also being suitable as a buy-to-let investment.

Finished to a high specification, the property's accommodation briefly comprises a lounge, a dining room, a brand new fitted kitchen, three generous bedrooms and newly-fitted bathroom suite.

The property benefits from gas central heating and has new carpets.

In more detail the front of the property is gravelled and has a concrete slab path to the front door and to an open archway to a passageway leading to a door to the kitchen.

The property is well presented throughout, having been decorated out in neutral shades.

The newly-fitted kitchen has modern white units, with contemporary chrome handles and wood-block-effect working surfaces, and splash-back mosaic tiling and a stainless steel sink, cooker, gas hob and a stainless steel extractor over.

French doors from the kitchen open out to the rear garden. The lounge is positioned to the front of the property, and features a bay window.

The bathroom has a smart, contemporary new white suite. It includes a panelled bath with a glazed shower screen and modern splash-back tiling and a wash hand basin set in fitted furniture, plus a WC and tiled flooring. The rear garden has lawn and is fenced on three sides.

Goodchilds Estate Agents & Lettings is a relatively young but dynamic company, having been established since 1994 as Goodchilds Property Investments offering affordable rental properties into the residential market.

MOSSLEY £130,000

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Goodchilds Estate Agents

TEL: 01922 711444.

EMAIL: bloxwich@goodchilds-uk.com

KEY FEATURES

- New to the market
- Recently refurbished
- Ideal first-time buy/buy to let
- Three generous bedrooms
- Newly-fitted bathroom & kitchen

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Family property has potential for an extension

This well-presented family home in Astbury Close, Bloxwich, lies in a cul-de-sac on the popular Turnberry development.

Having potential to extend, subject to permissions, it is for sale through Goodchilds Estate Agents at £210,000. The property has been well maintained and has a block paved driveway for two vehicles, an entrance hall with a guest WC, the main lounge leading through to a kitchen/diner with a conservatory to the rear.

BLOXWICH
£210,000

To the first floor are three bedrooms and a beautifully re-fitted bathroom. To the outside is a private and well-established rear garden with a patio area and a door into the garage.

The selling agents are expecting a great deal of interest in this sale.

Contact Goodchilds Estate Agents on 01922 405699.

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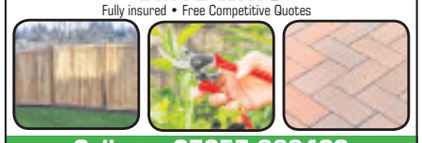

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All Caravans Wanted
Any Age or Condition
CASH * WAITING
Immediate collection
Call Bill on 07825 325 913

Caravans/ Motorhomes

Caravan Holiday home for sale
2010 swift Moselle £24,495
2 beds, bright open plan, well looked after, family shower room plus separate en-suite Castle view 5★ Caravan Holiday Home Park - Ultimate Coastal retreat
Minutes from glorious sandy beaches & world famous golf Course and Historic Harlech Castle .
Call Sue or Richard 01766 780328
www.castleviewpark.co.uk

A BEAUTIFUL PARK NR LUDLOW 35x12 caravans from £10,000.Gym Par 3 golf, bowls, why go further? www.bcpark.co.uk 01584823433.

SWIFT CHALLENGER 570SR
4 berth 2011 .
Foxed bed and rear washroom, separate shower, motor mover. 18ft. outstanding caravan
£11,250
07717090817

VW CAMPER AUTO TRAIL APACHE
4-berth 2.4 diesel auto L Reg. Lovely condition. Sat Nav. Dash Cam. Reverse Camera. MoT. 43k.
£7,995 ono.
0121 530 0834.

Sports & Leisure

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
To sell items upto £250.
Online at
bookanad.
expressandstar.co.uk

holidays

Self Catering Holidays

BURNHAM-ON-SEA
Self Catering Holiday Apartments
Disabled Facilities
Pet Friendly
01278 794111
www.GoSomerset.co.uk

Travel Abroad

READERS ARE REMINDED to check with any Advertisers that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

Yorkshire

YORKSHIRE DALES
Meadow Holidays
Country Cottages / Suites in Wensleydale
" Weeks from £209 per couple
" Weekends just £99 per couple
Families Welcome
Walk in scenic countryside by waterfalls or visit historic market towns with friendly Inns
Brochure (24hrs) 01969 624145
email: rita@meadowholidays.com
www.meadowholidays.com

what's on

Markets

STOURBRIDGE CAR BOOT
At Stourbridge Rugby Club
Open every Wednesday from 16th May
07957 399964

mind, body & soul

Massage

Mobile deep tissue aromatherapy massage treatment by qualified therapist
By appointment **07437 569187**

3 Home & Services

Furniture

katharine house hospice — enhancing life and living — Reg charity number: 1011712
Furniture not sold, why not donate it?
We can turn your quality used furniture into 1st class care for patients at Katharine House
Call us now on 01785 760715
for details or to arrange a FREE collection

FURNITURE NOT SOLD?Donate it to Katharine House Hospice. We collect for free. Telephone Cannock 01543 466885, Stafford 01785 247630, House clearance service 01785 760715.

OVAL EXTENDING wood dining table with six chairs. Very good condition. £80. 07769 167298. Must collect.

Household Appliances

AMAZING SALE FOR 1 WEEK ONLY
Everything must be cleared for new stock
COOKERS, FRIDGES, FREEZERS, AUTOS, FIRES & MORE
Past & Present
24 - 26 Church Street Bilston, (opposite town hall)
01902 403770

In Your Garden

BLOXWICH FENCING
Supply and Fit or DIY
Credit cards taken • Free quotes
WS3 2BQ
01922 712184

C B SHEDS & FENCING
We supply & fit. Free quotes.
Call: 01922 720270
We also supply sleepers and decking

6x5 Lap Panels
£17 each (inc vat)
WS3 2BQ
Bloxwich Fencing Ltd
or 01922 712184

Items For Sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
That the Business Advertisements(Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

ASH RECLAMATION new and used building materials, upvc doors and windows 01543 453222.

CORRUGATED GALVANISED Sheets. New, £8 can deliver. Also rooflights and box profile. David Broxton on 07834 489558.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

ASH RECLAMATION
All reclaimed building materials
UPVC doors and windows
New and Used
Gatehouse Trading Est.
Lichfield Road, Brownhills, WS8 6JZ
01543 453222
07956 627367

Items Wanted

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

Loans

READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

PC's, Laptops & Accessories

CLIENT COMPUTERS Certified technician and microsoft partner. Repair and maintain laptops and pcs. Virus removal, broken screens, wifi, windows problem etc. Laptops available. 0121 556 9481

CLIENT COMPUTERS

Certified technician & Microsoft partner.
Repair & maintain laptops and PCs. In West Midlands.
Virus removal, broken screens, wifi.
Windows problems etc.
Home visits or bring to me.
Long established.
Laptops available.
0121 556 9481

t.v. / home entertainment

Service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs. Digital aerials, sky, CCTV cameras. TV wall mounts and TV set ups. 07850 330251.

specialists at your service

Aerials

A AERIAL & SKY SPECIALIST
Digital Aerials Fitted
Sky & CCTV Cameras
Free Quotes. 7 days
07850 330251

Alarms/Security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £249
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

Bathrooms

BATHROOM DESIGN All bathrooms fitted, tiling, flooring, complete bathrooms call: 07850 382548.

Building Services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
All Building & Roofing Work
Driveways, Landscaping
Over 40 year exp | All work guaranteed
Free Quotes: 07837 994465
01902 831316

Building Supplies

RECLAIMED BRICKS, Tiles, Slates, Oakbeams, Flooring, York Stone. Cawarden 01889 574066. sales@cawardenreclaim.co.uk

Carpentry & Joinery

SPR CARPENTRY Six internal pre-primed doors fully fitted from £395. 0121 5322672 or 07958 552625.

Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning

A CLASS Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning Unbeatable Prices. OAP discounts. Call Paul 07870 341089

Carpet Fitters

A CARPETS & VINYLS supplied or just fitted, quality samples brought to your home, no job too small, free quotes call Mark 01543 820598 / 07941 619694.

CCTV

RAPID CCTV & Alarms Cameras, supplied and fitted, data networking, domestic and commercial, same day service, call Robbi on 07960 173589/ 0800 633 5899.

Driveways & Patios

TW LANDSCAPES
Driveway Restoration Specialists
Cleaning & Sealing, Patios, Driveways, Decorative Gravel Drives
All aspects of Landscaping, Fencing, Patios, Walls
New Block Paving & Tarmac Drives
WE WILL NOT BE BEATEN ON PRICE
Free no obligation quotation
call: 01785 878574
or 07845 483443

P.W DRIVEWAYS
The Block Paving Specialists.
Patios, Driveways, Pathways, Landscaping & more.
Special Offer £50 PSM
We will beat any like for like written quote
Free Quotes & Advice
01785 609076
(Based in Stafford)

Fencing

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards £795
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

Gardening Services

H. COOPER & SON Landscaping / garden maintenance. No job too small, Free Quotes: 07904 929632.

Landywood Tree & Landscaping Services
All garden work, tree felling/lopping, pruning, hedges trimmed, turf, patios, fencing, block-paving etc.
www.landywoodlandscaping.co.uk
01922 898 710 / 07973 177 976

Gas Fitting

GAS SERVICES
- Boilers • Cookers
- Fires • Gas Checks
- Landlord Certificates
- Gas Leaks Traced

Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/ 07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.

It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

Gates

ALL METAL GATES,RAILINGS, etc. Free quotes, also repairs & fitting. 07903 500642 24 hours.

DARLASTON FABS 30 years exp in supplying/ fitting gates and railings. Free quotes: 07497 667752.

Handyman Services

HANDY MAN - All trades, washing machines, outside taps, showers, plumbing, heating, gutter cleaning. Free quotes call: 07850 559315.

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

SMALL JOB SPECIALIST plumbing, carpentry, locks, OAP discount 01902 683100 or 07934 460864

House Clearances

A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE
Full, part and single rubbish removed.
Garage and sheds cleared.
Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
01922 492007

A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE
Full, part and single rubbish removed.
Garage and sheds cleared.
Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
01922 492007

ALL ROUND CLEARANCE
Professional family run business
House clearances full or part, also garages, sheds etc.
Telephone Key
07794 912844

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327 / 01902 534021**

Kitchen Fitters

THE KITCHEN FITTER Over 20 years experience. Call 07881 654757 or 01543 373233.

Plans Prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

Plastering

MINT PLASTERING
For the very best in plastering and rendering, full rooms inc materials from 110. Halls, stairs and landings from 200
30 years experience.
Free quotes. All work guaranteed
01543 327130 / 07519 694516

Plumbing & Heating

Keiron Jones Plumbing & Heating
Full heating systems £2200
Boiler Changes £1100
Longer warranty available upon request, fires and surrounds also available.
For Free Quotes Call:
01902 403823 07811 855231

ALL PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN
No job too large. All work guaranteed.
Call Will for a free quote
07521 411108

A.A HEATING & PLUMBING All gas work. Install/ Service/ Repair. Free quotes call: 07540 950588.

PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN No job too small or large. Call or text Will free quotes on: 07521 411108.

J.H. HEATING AND PLUMBING
- Central heating installation and repairs
- Bathrooms supplied and fitted or fitting only
- Kitchen installation
- Tiling, replastering, carpentry and building work
- Electrical work

DOMESTIC & COMMERCIAL
Tel: 0121 531 1932
Mobile: 07775 029452
www.jhheatingandplumbing.com
jhheatplumb@gmail.com

Removals

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
13 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KC REMOVALS We beat any quote, full or part loads, all areas. Anything considered. Call on 07867 862227.

KT REMOVALS 13 yrs exp. Single items to full load removals. Local / distance. Call Ric: 07771 727119.

Rubbish Removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No skips needed. Load/remove any waste house clearance. 07969 628382

Skip Hire

A absolute affordable skip
RUSSELL SKIPS
Mini, midi skips
Prompt delivery / collection
(0121) 520 3388 / 07721 387990

GOLDSHILL SKIP & SELF DELIVERIES
BRING YOUR WASTE TO US
(any size vehicle)
General, green, wood (can work out cheaper than a skip)
OR
HIRE A SKIP FROM US -
Phone for prices
0121 557 3346
82 Pikehelve Street,
West Bromwich, B70 0TU

STONES SKIP HIRE
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stoneskiphire.co.uk

4 Pets & Animals

Pets Corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

Equestrian Corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information, this is a legal requirement.

Guns & Dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

5 Business & Farming

Business Services

Are you ex-forces and unemployed?
We have a Veteran Employment Advisor in this area who may be able to support you in your civilian career
WALKING WITH THE WOUNDED
employment@wwtw.org.uk
03300 585800

business directory

Commercial Premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

Overseas Property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

Properties Wanted

Yes! HOMEBUYERS

We will buy your house fast!

Free Valuation? Yes! Any House? Yes!
Fast Sale? Yes! Any Location? Yes!
No Fees? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!

FREE, GUARANTEED, instant offer today!

Call 0121 663 1797
or text "Cash" to 66777
yeshomebuyers.com

Home Cash Buyer

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish

£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££

Houses / Land Required

We also buy Commercial Property

Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089

Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

LARGE SELF contained flat, Hednesford, carpets, full CH. Ring for details 07909 775843.

J9 Accommodation

NO DEPOSIT
★MOVE IN TODAY★
Studios
from **£90pw***
Rooms
from **£65pw***
**Includes Most Bills*
CHECK WEBSITE FOR LIVE LIST
Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme
01902 213121
J9accommodation.com

7 Jobs

Courses

ABK SECURITY SERVICES LIMITED
We provide Training in:
• First Aid / Health & Safety • Safe Moving & Handling • Security (SIA)
Call 01299 879 015
Email enquiries@abktraining.co.uk | www.abksecurity.com

Full Time General

GUNN JCB JCB

PARTS PERSON
Smethwick

Gunn JCB are the worlds largest main dealers for JCB Construction and Industrial machinery. Due to continued expansion, we are currently seeking to recruit a Parts Person for our depot at Halfords Lane,Smethwick.

As part of a small team, we are looking for a well-motivated individual who has a desire to exceed our customers' expectations in every way. Driving growth in our parts business, dealing with customers internally and externally,sourcing parts on our computer parts system, picking orders,creating orders,stock counting,stock maintenance are just a few of the requirements.

You must have an excellent proactive telephone manner,good keyboard skills, a can do attitude and be of smart appearance

- Excellent communication skills.
- Understanding of parts sales and retail operations.
- Customer focus and good interpersonal skills.
- Highly self-motivated 'can do' attitude.
- Driving License

Please forward your cv's to andy.jones@gunn-jcb.co.uk

Previous applicants need not apply.

Star Employment

Star Employment Services are currently recruiting for the following permanent positions:

- **Business Development Manager** *West Bromwich £25,000pa*
- **2 x Internal Call & Counter Specialist** *West Bromwich £25,000pa*
- **2 x HGV Technician** (Afternoon shift) *Wolverhampton £31,000pa*
- **Technician** (Late Shift) *Birmingham £24,000pa*
- **Field Sales** *Stourbridge £25,000 - £30,000pa*
- **Slitting Setter/Operator** *Brierley Hill £18,720pa*
- **Toolmaker** *West Bromwich £25,000 - £30,000pa*
- **Maintenance Engineer** – *Wolverhampton £25,000 - £33,000pa*
- **Grinder** *Wednesbury £21,000 - £27,000pa*
- **Miller** *Wednesbury £21,000 - £27,000pa*
- **Maintenance Engineer** *Wednesbury £25,000 - £30,000pa*
- **Finnish Speaking Sales Person** - *Stafford £18,000-£24,000pa*
- **Injection Mould Tool Designer** – *Dudley £30,000 - £38,000pa*
- **Junior Mechanical Engineer** – *Walsall £18,720 - £20,800pa*
- **Telesales Executive** *Telford £16,000 - £18,000pa*
- **Field Sales** *Telford/ Shrewsbury £20,000pa*

To apply for any of the above positions contact 01902 319333 or email CV to jobs@staremploymentservices.co.uk

Star Employment

Star Employment Services are currently recruiting for the following temporary positions:

- **Production Operative** *£8.00 per hour - Halesowen*
- **Team Leader** *£23,500 per annum - Halesowen*
- **CNC Operators** *Wolverhampton - £7.83 per hour - £8.30 per hour*
- **Customer Support Coordinator** *Wolverhampton - £18,000 per annum*
- **Foundry Operative** *Cradley Heath - £7.70 per hour*
- **Maintenance Engineer** *Cradley Heath - £13.00 - £14.00 per hour*
- **Bonding Labourer Days** *Cannock - £17,000 - £18,000 per annum*
- **Team Leaders Nights** *Cannock - £9.00 per annum*
- **Trainee Tig Welder** *Cannock - £7.60 - £8.00 per hour*
- **Trainee Press Brake Setter Operator** *Cannock - £7.83 - £8.00 per hour.*

For further information please visit our website www.staremploymentservices.co.uk
Or to apply for any positions please call 01902 319333 or email CV to jobs@staremploymentservices.co.uk

complete care

PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT

We are a unique organisation that provides specialist complex care services to clients with various disabilities, throughout the United Kingdom. The organisation currently employs over 900 staff.

The main purpose of this position is to provide and maintain a high standard of care to severely disabled clients with varied and complex care needs, allowing them to live independent and fulfilling lives within their own homes. To work either as part of a team or independently, ensuring that at all times your client receives an effective and efficient service that meets their chosen lifestyle, within a safe environment.

The role includes but is not exclusive to:

- Provide a high standard of care and support to the client within your allocated care package at all times
- Enable your client to live their chosen lifestyle in as free and independent manner as possible, ensuring their safety and well being at all times
- Establish and maintain an effective means of communication with your client and their family, being courteous, discrete and respectful at all times

No experience required

You must be flexible to work days, nights & weekends

Permanent full time & part time roles available.

To apply please email your CV to Applications@completecare.co.uk

8 Motoring

Cars Over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

MUST BE SEEN

BMW 318 DIESEL
2010, 117,000 miles
Colour blue
Cat D
£2,700.
07440 741733.

NISSA MICRA 1.6 SPORT CONVERTIBLE.
2007.
10 months MoT.
Red, 70,000 miles,
two lady owners,
good condition well maintained.
£1,625.
Tel: 07710 638859 / 07972 418222.

Cars Under £1500

LOOK

VAUXHALL VECTRA ESTATE
04 reg.
Spares or repair.
£275.
07402 213503. After 4.30pm.

BMW 318i SE TOURING ESTATE
52 reg.
Full MoT.
S/H. Full leather.
Excellent inside and out.
Drives superb.
First to see will buy.
£995.
07791 113080.

Motorbikes

IMMACULATE

SUZUKI TL1000S
1997.
Red.
14,000 miles.
Mint.
£3,250.
07966 659958.

Scrap Vehicles

A1 SF RECOVERY

SCRAP CARS WANTED
£100 Minimum Guaranteed
paid for complete cars
Collection 7 days a week
07813 184611

mainline Salvage & Recovery
• SCRAP CARS WANTED
• FREE COLLECTION
• TOP PRICES PAID
Fully Licensed • C.O.D Issued
No Fines • No Comebacks
1000's of vehicle parts in stock
01902 871111 • 07772 240819
07895 346811
www.mainlinesalvage.co.uk

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400.
Oldbury Area.

spares & accessories

Number Plates

B057 TAP
PLUMBERS MARKETING NUMBER PLATE
Available for immediate transfer.
Take your business to the next level for only.
Offers.
07450 861956.

9 Local Information

Public Notices

PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on **01902 319694** or email **marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk**
(remember to include a name/ contact number for confirmation of receipt)

MARJORIE KENDRICK (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 24 Warley Croft Oldbury West Midlands B68 9JQ, who died on 25/06/2018, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 02/11/2018, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
SILKS SOLICITORS LTD
27 Birmingham Street Oldbury
West Midlands B69 4DY
7538096

GARETH JAMES HALLOWS (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 31 Bridge Street, West Bromwich B70 9HW, who died on 29/12/2017, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 29/10/2018, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.
The Will Associates Asset Management Ltd, THE OLD MAGISTRATES COURT, CHESHIRE STREET, MARKET DRAYTON TF9 1PH.
Ref: P20180418-073135

LICENSING ACT 2003

I gaganjit singh of 5 pottery road, oldbury, birmingham, b68 9ex. Herby give notice i have applied under S17 licensing and in accordance with S12 licensing act 2003 for a premises license for the above mentioned premises namely Pottery Plaice for the sale of alcohol.

Mon to sat 12pm till 11pm
Sun 4pm till 11pm

Any person wishing to make a representation regarding the application must do so in writing to trading standards and licensing adult social care, health and wellbeing Sandwell council house PO Box 2372 Oldbury B69 3BS.

Email:licensing_team@sandwell.gov.uk within 28 days of this notice.

A copy of the application may be inspected during normal business hours. It is an offence, liable on conviction to a fine up to level 5 on the standard scale, under section 158 of the licensing act 2003 to make a false statement in or in connection with this application.

09/08/2018

10 Personals

Personal

Angels
The largest adult superstore in the Midlands
• Adult Toys • Sexy Lingerie
Cinema Now Open
Unit 5 Frederick Street, Walsall WS2 9NE
01922 635544

AT MANYANA Gentlemans Club, 5*. 0121 472 7281. www.manyana massageparlour.co.uk

LONELY Ladies, sexy single mums/ divorcees looking for male attention/ dates, 30+. 07008 026348

MID 70'S GENTLEMAN
Likes to dine out and days out, etc, is hoping to find a female companion to join him, must be a non-smoker and live in Cannock area.
Box Number P21307
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton,
WV1 1ES

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Meadow Avenue, West Bromwich) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2018 has made an order to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along Meadow Avenue, West Bromwich between Crabtree Road and Charlemont Road. Traffic will be diverted via Charlemont Road, Beaconview Road, Smithmoor Crescent, Crabtree Close and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 09/10/2018, effective from 29/08/18. Purpose – Gas Mains replacement to by Balfour Beatty for Cadent Gas.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (West Bromwich Ringway, West Bromwich) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2018 intends to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along West Bromwich Ringway between Spon Lane and St Michael Street. Traffic will be diverted via Spon Lane, Sam's Lane, Lyttleton Street, Bromford Lane, Moor Street, Price Street, St Michael Street, High Street, Carters Green, Albion Roundabout, The Expressway, Cronehills Linkway, Congregation Way, Reform Street, Walsall Street, Bull Street and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 03/09/2018, effective from 02/09/18. Purpose – works to repair a ramp on speed table by Fitzgerald for Sandwell Council.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration & Growth
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/18/61924	Metis Developments Ltd Metis Developments Ltd and Warwick Homes Ltd	Simpson Street Day Centre, 6 Simpson Street, Oldbury B69 4AL	Demolition of former day centre and proposed construction of 10 No. 2 bed apartments.

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.45a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.45a.m. to 5.00p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

AMY HARHOFF, Director of Regeneration & Growth

Cat has sleeker lines and more style than many other SUVs

It is certainly a good-looking vehicle

By Carmel Stewart

Jaguar's entry into the SUV market a couple of years ago was inevitable if somewhat surprising, given that it puts itself in direct competition with the excellent Land Rover Discovery Sport but, clearly, it is a marque which is sure of its market.

And so it proved to be. The F-Pace swiftly earned its stripes by becoming the company's fastest selling global model with two in every five Jaguars sold being F-Paces. Adding the World Car Design of the Year in 2017 only increased the attraction.

And there is no doubt that it is a good-looking vehicle, with sleeker lines and more style than many another SUV. Top notch materials and build quality are really a given with Jaguar, making the entry-level price of £34,730 far less painful when you see what you are getting for your money.

Although designed and developed in the UK and, at present, built at Solihull, the F-Pace was clearly destined for global success. Before it even came onto the market it was tested in extreme climates of -40°C to +50°C to ensure it performs as well in the Arctic as it does in the Sahara. And it performs pretty well in the UK too.

There's plenty of head and leg room

Engine choices range from a 2.0litre, four-cylinder 163ps, turbocharged diesel linked to a six-speed manual gearbox to a 3.0litre, V6, supercharged 380ps petrol married to an eight-speed automatic transmission. The immense power of this latter unit will be pleasing to anyone thinking of making the switch from diesel but, as with all makes and sizes of engines, the hit in economy will have a serious impact on the wallet.

Jaguar's 3.0litre V6 300ps diesel returns an official average of 47.1mpg while the 2.0litre four-cylinder 300ps petrol returns 37mpg. No need for calculators, abacuses, fingers or even toes to see that the change will add to the expense of driving.

However, it doesn't detract from the enjoyment of driving the F-Pace AWD 2.0litre diesel – or any other diesel in the range. On startup it has that slight air of sluggishness which comes to the fore when setting out from a steep incline followed by a steep hill. By the time the terrain was back on an even keel, the engine was well into its stride and sailed along smoothly and silently. Pick-up on roundabouts and overtakes was immediate and reassuring.

The ride is composed with suspension which manages to stay on the comfort side of the fine line between that and firm. The addition of torque vectoring on the higher trims, whereby minuscule braking is applied inside the front and rear wheels on cornering, further aids the unruffled composure of the F-Pace.

Occupants have a plush leather interior to enjoy, more than enough leg and head room, with plenty of cubby holes and storage spaces dotted around.

Trim levels number four – Prestige, Portfolio, R-Sport and S. Entry-level spec includes a push button start, eight-inch touch screen, digital instrument cluster, hill start assist, cruise control with speed limiter, Bluetooth, DAB radio, navigation system, rain-sensing wipers, heated front seats, front and rear fog lights and 18-inch alloys.

A step-up to Portfolio adds an extra inch to the wheel size, a fixed panoramic sunroof, 10-way power front seats and a rear-view camera among other things. Prices start at £39,730.

Prestige and R-Sport come with a choice of seven engine/transmission combinations. Portfolio adds the mighty 3.0litre V6 300ps diesel to the mix while the top-notch S model is exclusively powered by that same 3.0litre V6 plus the 380ps 3.0litre V6 supercharged petrol engine but, with a price tag of £53,365, deep pockets are needed for this version.

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The latest Fabia comes with a suite of new safety kit

Updated Fabia to start from £12,840

Škoda has announced pricing and specifications for the latest update to its Fabia supermini. The range kicks off from just £12,840 for a model in S trim, fitted with the 74bhp 1.0-litre petrol engine.

That starting price undercuts its sister car, the Volkswagen Polo by £1,395 – and that's for a VW fitted with the lesser-powered 59bhp engine.

The latest Fabia comes with a suite of new safety kit plus improved connectivity, as well as Škoda's latest 'Simply Clever' touches.

The range kicks off with the naturally aspirated, 1.0-litre engine with 74bhp. It's capable of 0-60mph in a rather lengthy 14.7 seconds, but Skoda claims a fuel consumption of nearly 59mpg and CO2 emissions of 110g/km.

Moving up the range there are two turbocharged petrols with 94bhp or 108bhp. It's the latter that's the only car available with an automatic gearbox, which is an option above the standard six-speed manual. The two lower-powered cars get five-speed manual gearboxes. Fuel consumption tops out at 61mpg, with the 94bhp model boasting the lowest CO2 emissions of just 104g/km.

Trim levels start with basic S, which still gains autonomous emergency braking, LED daytime running lights and a trip computer.

SE trim, from £14,115 gains front foglights plus 15-inch alloy wheels, while stylish Colour Edition adds 16-inch wheels and unique paint finishes for its £14,665 starting price.

Top-spec SE L is priced from £15,205 brings serious big-car equipment, including standard sat-nav and connected services. The top of the range Monte Carlo is the luxurious option in the range though, with climate control air-conditioning, LED lights, rear electric windows and black trim. It costs from £16,785.

All but Colour Edition models are available as an Estate. This adds £1,020 onto the base price of the S model.

What's the coolest car on the school run?

Automotive expert HPI has revealed the top five list of cars guaranteed to boost the 'school gate cred' of UK mums and dads following a poll amongst its team of specialist motoring editors.

Derren Martin

The poll comes ahead of the new school term in September.

Derren Martin, head of current valuations at HPI, said: "With the return to school imminent after the long, hot summer we thought it would be fun to look at some of the makes and models of cars that can give the ultimate feeling of school gate cred.

"Our team of editors considered everything from top of the range supercars and concept cars but eventually decided to keep it real by settling for more realistic and practical vehicles that would really appeal to parents but still have some wow factor."

The top five list of cars offering the greatest school gate cred is as follows:

1) Jaguar F-Pace
2) Range Rover Evoque
3) VW Tiguan
4) Audi TT
5) BMW X1

Derren added: "The Jaguar F-Pace just edged it in our editors' poll ahead of the Evoque and the Tiguan. With its iconic Jaguar heritage in a popular SUV body style, the F-Pace is sporty and compact yet relatively affordable.

"The popularity of SUVs shows no sign of letting up and manufacturers are pulling out all the stops to make sure their models turn heads."

Megane R.S. brings added agility to hot-hatch segment

By Jack Evans

The arrival of any new performance Renault is an exciting thing, but here's a new car from the French manufacturer to really get the pulses of petrolheads racing – the Megane R.S.

A reimagined version of an iconic hot-hatch, this latest R.S. packs a new turbocharged engine as well as a range of mechanical touches designed to make it as exciting to drive as possible. It has some capable rivals to go up against though, which is why we've headed out to our favourite routes to see what this new Megane R.S. can really do.

There's a lot to talk about with the new Megane R.S. There's that new engine – though we'll look at this in more depth further on – along with a four-wheel-steering system designed to give the car better agility and stability both on road and track. Our test car also comes with the Cup Chassis pack – this incorporates a limited slip differential, stiffer springs and dampers along with an anti-roll bar – as well as some all-important red brake calipers.

We think the Megane R.S. looks excellent, particularly in the 'Volcanic Orange' of the test car

Flexible

The Megane R.S. uses a 1.8-litre turbocharged petrol engine which here produces 276bhp and 390Nm of torque. It shares this powerplant with the Alpine A110 sports car, in fact, and it's a flexible unit indeed thanks to a decent amount of low-down punch. It's driven through either a dual-clutch automatic gearbox or, in our test car's case, a six-speed manual.

It'll crack 60mph in 5.6 seconds, and continue onwards to a top speed of 158mph. As a result of the turbocharging, the R.S. can return relatively good economy figures too – Renault claims 39.2mpg on the combined cycle, while emissions are reasonable at 163g/km CO2. It's a good balance between genuine performance and economy, which is just what you want from a useable daily hot hatch.

The first thing you notice about the way the Megane R.S. drives comes as a result of the inclusion of that four-wheel-steering. When you're attacking a bend, there's a sensation that the car is tightening in on itself.

It's unnerving to begin with, but once you're used to it it gives you the confidence to come into bends quicker than you may have initially thought. It also gives the car a lot of agility in day-to-day driving, such as when exiting a roundabout or even just turning out of tighter junctions. Whereas in Sport mode this is limited to usage up to around 30mph, in Race mode this is around 60mph.

The only real issue lies with the Cup chassis. It's brilliant, minimising body roll while giving the Megane an overall feeling of alertness, but the by-product is a general unsettled feeling – the car has a tendency to be dragged by ruts in the road, and you seem to be fighting the steering at times to make it go in a straight line.

We think the Megane R.S. looks excellent, particularly in the 'Volcanic Orange' of our test car. The widened rear track looks particularly purposeful, while the variety of inlets and vents really do help to give the car a lot of presence. Our test car also came with intricate 19-inch 'Interlagos' alloy wheels, which complement the extended arches well.

It's an excellent compromise between understated looks and the over-the-top styling that we've come to expect from hot hatches – Honda Civic Type R, we're looking at you.

The Megane's cabin benefits from a smattering of what we'd call 'sporty' touches; there's the obligatory bolstered bucket seats, alongside an Alcantara-trimmed steering wheel which is refreshingly circular when compared to the popular flattened-off style. Is it lacking in that 'wow' factor that we'd hope for from a hot hatch? Perhaps. But everything is well positioned, and the general seat position is spot-on, with plenty in the way of adjustment.

There's even 384 litres of boot space to play with, which is more than you'll find in the Volkswagen Golf. This can be extended to 1,247 litres by folding down the rear seats, too.

As standard, the R.S. gets a good degree of standard equipment. There's Renault's latest R-LINK2 infotainment system, which is accessed via a seven-inch touchscreen that dominates the centre of the cabin. The four-wheel-steer system is included as standard, as is a regular sport chassis.

However, our car featured a variety of optional extras. The Cup Chassis Pack, for instance, costs £1,500, while that out-there paintwork commanded £1,300. A larger 8.7-inch centre touchscreen comes with a £300 premium, while the upgraded Bose sound system – which is excellent – requires a further £800. All in, our test car came to £34,345, a considerable hike over the £27,495 base price. Keener drivers will no doubt see the addition of the Cup Pack as a must-have, and we'd have to agree too.

The Renault Megane R.S. is an exceptionally accomplished hot hatch, and one that feels perfectly suited to the UK's country roads. Though the new four-wheel-steer system takes a little getting used to, it enables the Megane to deliver a truly sharp driving experience. The car's negative is its need to be driven towards the upper reaches in order to get the best from it – at lower speeds it feels just a little too firm. However, commit to the car and it'll reward you time and time again.

Used car market is in good health

Britain's used car market held strong in 2018's second quarter, with sales down by a marginal 0.4 per cent, according to figures released today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

A total of 2,093,429 vehicles changed hands, just 8,725 fewer than the same three months in 2017.

Superminis remained the most popular segment, despite a 2.6 per cent decline. They accounted for a third of the market (32.6 per cent) and were followed by small and medium-sized family cars.

SUVs and executive models experienced the biggest growth, with demand up 10.7 per cent and 3.9 per cent respectively.

The popularity of diesel cars grew 3.2 per cent, with some 868,573 used buyers driving one home in the period, while transactions involving petrol-powered vehicles fell by 3.3 per cent.

Meanwhile, demand for hybrid, plug-in hybrid and fully electric vehicles grew by more than a quarter, with some 26,832 changing hands – 5,417 more than a year ago. Elsewhere, trends closely followed the new car market, with black the UK's most popular used car colour for a second consecutive quarter and silver and blue taking second and third places. Demand for white cars grew fastest, up 9.8 per cent, followed by orange, up 9.1 per cent.

Meanwhile, green and maroon lost most favour among buyers, falling 14.6 per cent and 9.6 per cent respectively.

Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive, said: "It's great to see the used car sector remain in robust health as motorists take advantage of the exciting high-tech models filtering down from the new sector – including some of the latest low-emission diesel and alternatively-fuelled vehicles.

"However, with used sales so closely reflecting the new car market, some cooling is expected over the coming months. Given fleet renewal is the fastest way to improve air quality and reduce CO2, we need greater business and consumer confidence to keep both markets moving."

2,093,429 vehicles changed hands, 8,725 fewer than the same three months in 2017

The all-conquering Walsall side with Archer, centre, front row, as captain

A Walsall team picture rom 1976. Archer is on the far right end of the front row

Nick Archer with a framed picture of the 1976 team

Archer is handed a commemorative bat after a Lord's win over Chorley

Archer raises his bat to a half-century of service

NICK ARCHER celebrated countless half-centuries during his playing days – but it's doubtful any gave him as much pride as his latest one.

The bat, pads and gloves may have been discarded a few years ago but that hasn't stopped the former Walsall and Staffordshire batsman chalking up another milestone.

Archer, 62, is currently enjoying his 50th season of Birmingham League cricket as player and administrator.

On the field, he enjoyed a stunning period of success with the all-conquering Walsall side of the 80s and 90s. He won the Birmingham League title nine times skippering the side for five of those and a National Knockout success at Lord's in 1996.

Meanwhile Staffordshire, under the guidance of Archer, were the strongest Minor County side in the country at that time.

And when he decided to end his playing days, he took the lead role for the league by becoming general manager in 1999. It's a position he still fills today as the league gets set for the biggest shake-up in club cricket in 20 years.

Shake-up

It all began for Archer as a 13-year-old when he made his debut for Walsall's second team in 1969. But, at the time, cricket wasn't his number one sport, rugby was – and he wasn't bad at that either!

"I first played in 1969, in the second XI when I was 13 against Moseley. I batted number 10 and I got nought not out," recalls Archer. "I can't remember the exact circumstances why I played, but I started to play more regularly the following year.

"But I only ever played half-seasons until I was 18 because I went to Queen Mary's School in Walsall and they scheduled fixtures on a Saturday afternoon. I played in the first team for the first time in 1971. Then I played a few more in 1972 when we won the league."

The following year saw Archer play regularly for the first team. His promise earned him a call for Staffordshire and also attracted the attention of the first class counties. But the oval ball still came out on top, and there were no thoughts of becoming a professional cricketer. "In 1975 I went to Lougborough University. I also played rugby for them, so that also curtailed my cricket a bit," he added. "In 1974, I didn't play at all because I was picked to go on tour with the England under-19 rugby team.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

It was very enjoyable to play in a very good side and to be a major cog in it, both as captain and as a player.

"That was a bit of a watershed year for me cricket wise, because at that time I'd had invitations to play for a couple of county second XIs – Derbyshire and Warwickshire – but I couldn't fulfil them in. Cricket was very much a second sport, really, until the early 80s."

As a fly-half or full-back he played for Moseley who, with the game an amateur sport, played in the country's top division.

"Looking back, cricket wise, and at what I eventually did with Minor Counties and Walsall, I have no regrets whatsoever."

Archer also enjoyed a successful career outside of cricket, in advertising and marketing, that eventually saw him run David Archer Associates, a company set up by his father. And while business was going well, the cricket was going even better as Walsall ruled the roost locally and Staffordshire nationally. "I won the title nine times as a player and I was skipper for five of those," he said.

"The 90s was a big era of success. We won the title in 92, 94, 96, 99 and also beat Chorley in the National KO at Lord's in 96. It was very enjoyable at the time to play in a very good side and to be a major cog in it, both as captain and as a player. It was a very, very strong side and the fact that we won National Knockout in 1996 while our first, second and third teams all won their leagues, we had a very reasonable claim to be the strongest club in the country at that time."

Archer played a key role as he accumulated nearly 11,000 top flight Birmingham League runs – a Walsall record. He claimed a unique double in 1989 as he finished top of the league and Minor Counties batting averages.

Not surprisingly, the appearances at the home of cricket are highlights – he also led Staffordshire out there in 91, 92 and 93, missing out on three successive Minor County Championship and KO doubles when they lost to Devon in 92.

But he has played against some of the world's best down the years, and two encounters with West Indies fast bowlers Sylvester Clarke and Malcolm Marshall while on duty with Staffs stand out.

"I opened with Steve Dean for Staffs against Surrey. Deany used to run to the wicket to make sure he took the first ball and I was quite happy to let him do it with Clarke bowling.

Opening

"We ran a three off the first ball. Clarke's opening spell was six overs and I faced five overs and five balls of of it! I ended up scoring 45 as a makeshift opener with Dickie Bird umpiring, which was an experience in itself.

Taking the various Test match players he crossed swords with out of the equation, three players stand out for Archer during his playing days.

"The two outstanding batters for me were Steve Dean and Roy Virgin at Walsall," he adds. "Roy came to Walsall straight from county cricket and he was a real gnarled ex-pro. He taught more about batting than anyone else.

"Ability wise, Deany was as good a batsman as I have ever played with and Keith Arnold was the best bowler I played with. They played in same team for nine to 10 years which was the bedrock of our success."

Archer decided to call time on his league career when the league came calling with the offer of a general manger role. He helped smooth the league's expansion that saw promotion and relegation introduced and eventually saw it go from one division to four. And now he is ready to oversee another revamp that will see the league cut to two divisions next season.

Trampolinists spring into action for contest

THE 2018 Trampoline, Tumbling & DMT British Championships springs into action at Arena Birmingham next month.

Spectators can witness the return of history-making Olympic silver medal trampolinist Bryony Page on home soil, as she takes on stiff competition from world team bronze medallists Laura Gallagher and Kat Driscoll. Nathan Bailey and Luke Strong will go head-to- head for the men's senior trampoline crown, while disability trampoline gymnasts will also perform exhilarating routines in a bid for medals.

The senior tumbling teams will be led by 2018 European champion Lucie Colebeck, and her team-mates Yasmin Taite, Kristof Willerton, Greg Townley and Elliott Browne.

DMT gymnasts in action include newly-crowned Junior European team champions and individual senior gold medallist Kirsty Way.

The competition takes place on September 22 and 23. Tickets are on sale now via www.theticketfactory.com or by calling 0844 33 88 222.

Soap stars line up for charity match

CELEBRITIES from some of the nation's most popular soap operas will lace up their boots for a charity football match in Walsall.

Stars from Emmerdale, Hollyoaks and Coronation Street will line up on Sunday at Rushall Olympic against The Midcounties Co-operative, which organised the event.

Soap stars taking part include Ashley Taylor-Dawson and Jacob Roberts, better known as Darren Osborne and Damon Kinsella from Hollyoaks, Alan Halsall who plays Tyrone Dobbs in Coronation Street, and Anthony Quinlan, aka Pete Barton in Emmerdale. Fans can meet and greet the stars at the end.

Money raised will go towards local charities including sexual exploitation prevention charity Street Teams, Alzheimer's support groups ALZ Café and Monthly Alzheimer's Support Evenings as well as blind and sight loss support centre, Beacon Vision. Kick off is 2pm and entry is £8 adults, £5 children with family discounts available. Details and tickets on 07508 398092.

Trio net their place in national tournament

THREE Wolverhampton athletes have netted a call-up for the Severn Stars squad at the School Games at netball.

The School Games are a national multi-sport event for the UK's most talented school-age athletes and take place at Loughborough University from August 30 to September 2.

All three girls are 15 and attend Wolverhampton Girls High. They are twins sisters Halee and Rudee Robinson, who play for Yendys Netball Club, and team-mate Lucy Toor, who also represents Wasps Netball Club.

More than 1,400 athletes will compete across 11 sports, five of which disability disciplines. The Wolverhampton trio will follow in the footsteps of some of Britain's biggest sporting stars who have competed at the event before going on to senior international success.

Previous competitors include Paralympic champions Hannah Cockroft, Ellie Simmonds and Jonnie Peacock, Olympic champion Adam Peaty, heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson and sprinter Adam Gemili.

Sport

In good Nick! 50 years of service to cricket

Page 35

It's Barnes storming in the middle

HE MAY not have got on the scoresheet this time, but Harvey Barnes is relishing his new central role. The Leicester loanee, who has settled in quickly, thinks Darren Moore's new system gets the best out of his new team-mates.

"I enjoyed playing in the middle," he said. "I got on the ball a lot and when I did I felt like I had a lot of options with players making runs.

"We've only started trying it recently but the boys have taken to it well. It's a formation that I think will work for us if we execute it right. Going forward we have a lot of options with the wing-backs. They pose a danger, Matty on the right, Gibbo on the left, and then you have bodies in the middle. So as a team it suits us really well."

Capable of bursting past defenders, slipping through-balls to the strikers, and shooting from distance off either foot, Barnes is an exciting talent.

But he was quick to praise strikers Dwight Gayle and Jay Rodriguez, as well as wing-backs Matt Phillips and Kieran Gibbs for making the sort of runs that make his life easier.

"There's nothing better than when you have the ball and driving forward with it, knowing that you've got those options if you need them," he said.

"You can either take the difficult route, which is trying to slide clever balls through the middle, but you know, if it comes to it, you can go wide and they're going to produce down the wings and put a good ball in.

"It's lovely scoring goals, but as long as we're getting the points, that's the main thing."

Barnes, who still lives in hometown Leicester, has settled in remarkably quickly to life at the Albion.

"A lot of it is from the team, they've given me confidence and I felt a real warmth from the boys and the gaffer," he said.

Dartmouth defeat opens door for rivals to take title

WEST Bromwich Dartmouth's 30-run defeat to neighbours Smethwick leaves Knowle & Dorridge and Berkswell as clear favourites for the 2018 Premier Division title.

A superb individual effort from Gurinder Singh upset Dartmouth at Broomfield, where Smethwick, led by an unbeaten 77 from Singh reached 225-7 with Kadeer Ali taking 3-49.

Singh then took 4-30, as Dartmouth finished 30 runs short, despite 75 from Brinder Phagura. Old Elizabethans were tumbled out for 78 at Old Hill, with Naqaash Tahir taking 4-23 and Zahid Kafiat picking up 3-45 to set up a seven-wicket victory which lifts Old Hill into third place in division three.

Wednesbury hold on for win in team test

RUGBY

Wednesbury 24 Wolverhampton 2nds 17

THIS week Wednesbury took on a strong Wolves side, in this their second pre-season friendly.

Wednesbury took an early lead after only four minutes, Stanley Zvidi received the ball on the halfway line using his speed and agility raced towards the Wolves try, but just short of the line he was tackled to the ground in doing so he managed to lay the ball off to Jordan Allwood to dive over the line for the try, Matt Dale converting.

Wednesbury kept the pressure on Wolves but their defence held using the counter attack to great advantage, and eventually they scored, no conversion. With the first half coming to an end Wednesbury's Aaron Harris picked up a loose ball and dived over the line for the try, no conversion.

During the interval both coaches made a number of changes to their teams. At the start Wednesbury were soon on the attack. Jordan Allwood added his second try of the game, no conversion, giving Wednesbury a 12-point lead. Two minutes later Ben Baker picked up a loose ball and managed to force his way over the line, Matt Dale added the conversion.

For the last 20 minutes Wednesbury made more changes, which Wolves took advantage of, running in a try, with no conversion. This made for a jittery end to the game for Wednesbury, with just two minutes remaining Wolves ran in their third try this time converting, to make it a nerve-wracking finish. Wednesbury coach Gary Summers said: "We are still recruiting ambitious players particularly front row who want to help continue our journey. Anyone interested should contact Neil Haines on 07950505171 or email neilhaines1961@hotmail.co.uk."

SEVEN-UP, AS BAGGIES FIZZ

IN-FORM Matt Phillips is relishing Albion's new 'front-foot' approach under Darren Moore.

Phillips scored twice for the Baggies in their 7-1 rout of his former club Queens Park Rangers on Saturday, despite being asked to play as a wing-back in a new 3-4-1-2 system.

But the 27-year-old is happy to track back when needed, because he's been convinced by Moore's methods and has been guaranteed chances to get forward. "It's a new system, a new way of playing, it's more on the front foot," said Phillips. "In this formation I get a lot of the ball. It's a new position for myself, but like the rest of the boys, I'm learning."

A self-confessed confidence player, Phillips paid tribute to Moore's impact on his mind-set.

Brilliant

"He gives you bags of confidence," said Phillips. "He's told me he can see me getting goals this season and hopefully that continues. Towards the end of last season we started getting back to what we're about. The manager has been brilliant, Graeme Jones has come in and been brilliant, as have the rest of the staff. There's a real togetherness."

And Phillips is happy to put the defensive work in under the new system. "It's a part of my game anyway," he said. "I've shown previously that I will get back and help defending when I can."

With three goals already under his belt, Phillips is a signed-up member of Albion's Fab Four, and he's enjoying playing with new boys Dwight Gayle and Harvey Barnes. "Dwight's always scored goals," he said. "If you put the ball in the right areas, he's going to get goals and Harvey's started on flames as well so we've got a lot of attacking potential. We've just got to keep at it but it starts with the boys at the back. I thought the back three were brilliant."

Matt Phillips drills home his second of the afternoon against his former team at the Hawthorns

Only time will tell whether this was a coming of age performance, a victory that kick-starts a season as scintillating and successful as this match.

The Hawthorns pitch has never looked so big, or at least it hasn't done so in recent years.

Johnstone's distribution, which is better than his predecessor's, kick-started the process.

He was comfortable passing out from the back with either foot, whether it was a slide rule into Chris Brunt or a clip over the press to Matt Phillips or Kieran Gibbs. From there, Albion tried to find Barnes, that two-footed 20-year-old superstar-in-waiting who relished his new free role behind the strikers. If they couldn't, Jake Livermore mopped up the pieces, moving into midfield like an unstoppable tank suddenly capable of picking an incisive forward pass.

It is arguably the best attack in this league, and they have all scored now. Who knows how many they'll get in total.

Premier start: Rangers and Tivi lead way

BLACK COUNTRY RANGERS and Tividale have both started the West Midlands Premier season in dominant fashion.

Rangers are leading the way at this early stage following four victories from as many games – the latest being a 3-1 triumph at Haughmond on Saturday. Tivi are hot on their heels after three wins from three – the most recent a 7-1 demolition of Bilston Town.

Jake Healy, Luke Wilson and Liam Hughes got the goals for Rangers as they came out on top in Shropshire.

Boss Wayne Spicer said: "It's looking great, to be honest. We had to be firing on all cylinders to get something against Haughmond, and they were. It was a good win."

Tividale may have blitzed Bilston, but Scott Hamilton's charges took the lead at Queen Street – through skipper Matt Barnett five minutes in. It took Dave King's men only a few moments to draw level through Darragh Bustin. Demetri Brown then put them ahead.

Bustin got his second before half-time, and Brown made it 4-1 just prior to the hour mark. Substitute Rion Francis-Mills grabbed a brace, either side of Bustin completing his hat-trick from the penalty spot.

Smethwick drew 1-1 with Bewdley Town. In the West Midlands Division One, Tipton Town won a nine-goal thriller at Sikh Hunters, taking the honours 6-3. Terry Davies scored a hat-trick, Scott Broadway two and Rich Smith one.

Prophet leading the way in pro-am

SANDWELL PARK ace Richard Prophet bagged the £1,000 first prize after finishing top of the leaderboard at Telford Golf Club Pro-Am.

The 29-year-old shot a 67 to finish two strokes ahead of runner-up Simon Lilly, from De Vere Staverton Estate.

Prophet's efforts weren't quite enough to secured the team prize for Sandwell Park. Instead they had to settle for second behind South Staffs Golf Club, who topped the standings with 92 stableford points, with Pype Hayes back in third.

More than 35 teams – comprising three amateurs and one professional – took part in the tournament.

★★★

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Friday 31st September • 10am - 3pm
Saturday 1st September • 10am - 3pm
Thursday 6th September • 10am - 3pm
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